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The Danish People's Party, the Italian Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party in a Comparative Perspective: Party Ideology and Electoral Support

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**The Danish People's Party,
the Italian Northern League
and the Austrian Freedom
Party in a Comparative
Perspective: Party Ideology
and Electoral Support**

Susi Meret

SPIRIT PhD Series

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PhD dissertation

**The Danish People's Party, the Italian Northern League and the
Austrian Freedom Party in a Comparative Perspective:
Party Ideology and Electoral Support**

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'(...) alle Begriffe, in denen sich ein ganzer Prozess semiotisch zusammenfasst, entziehen sich der Definition; definierbar ist nur Das, was keine Geschichte hat'.

Nietzsche, F. (1887): Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift. – Zweite Abhandlung, Kapitel 13.

[All concepts in which a whole process is semiotically concentrated can't be defined; only that which has no history can be defined]

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Acronyms

Austria

BZÖ	Bündnis Zukunft Österreichs – Alliance for the Future of Austria
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs – Austria Freedom Party
Grüne	Die Grünen – Green Party
LiF	Liberales Forum – Liberal Forum
ÖVP	Die österreichische Volkspartei – Austrian People's Party
SPÖ	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs – Austrian Socialdemocratic Party
VdU	Verband der Unabhängigen – The Federation of Independents

Denmark

CD	Centrum Demokrater – Centrum Democrats
DF / DPP	Dansk Folkeparti – Danish People's Party
Enh	Enhedslisten – Unity List
FrP	Fremskridtsparti – Progress Party
K	De Konservative – Conservative Party
KrF	Kristeligt Folkeparti – Christian People's Party
KD	Kristendemokraterne – Christian Democrats
NA	Ny Alliance – New Alliance
RV	Radikale Venstre – Social Left
S	Socialdemokraterne – Socialdemocrats
SF	Socialist Folkeparti – Socialist People's Party

Italy

AN	Alleanza Nazionale – National Alliance
CdL	Casa delle Libertà – House of Freedom
CCD	Centro Cristiano Democratico – Christian Democratic Centre
CDU	Unione Cristiano Democratici – United Christian Democrats
DC	Democrazia Cristiana – Christian Democracy
DE	Democrazia Europea – European Democracy
FI	Forza Italia – Forza Italy
LN	Lega Nord – Northern League
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano – Italian Communist Party
PD	Partito Democratico – Democratic Party
PdL	il Popolo della Libertà – The People's Freedom Party
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano – Italian Socialist Party
RC	Rifondazione Comunista – Communist Refoundation
Ulivo	Ulivo – Olive Tree coalition
Verdi	(Federazione dei) Verdi – Green Party

PREFACE

Something representing a ‘point of no-return’ in the approach to the role and political influence of the radical right took place in Austria at the beginning of 2000. The event was the formation of a ‘black and blue’ coalition government between the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the Christian-democratic Party (the ÖVP). The swearing in of the government was followed by massive public interest and media coverage, within and particularly outside the Austrian borders.

The new configuration of the Austrian government was the obvious result of the Austrian parliamentary election of October 1999. At this election the Freedom Party gathered just about 27 pct. of the votes, becoming the second biggest electoral force in Austria after the Austrian social democrats (SPÖ). But many saw the events taking place in Austria in those months as a sign that a border had been crossed. Most noticeably, at the European level, the formation of the FPÖ and ÖVP government coalition triggered the long threatened official diplomatic sanctions against Austria decided by the other 14 member states. However, not only the institutional Europe mobilized against the political developments in Austria. The ‘Thursday marches’ in Vienna became a regular public rally against the newly formed government. Both inside and outside Austria, several voices warned against the worrisome extremist and racist backlash that was taking place in the small Alpine country.

At the time these events were unfolding, I was in Northern Italy. More precisely in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region, which is the region where I was born and grew up and which is geographically located just at the border with Austrian Kärnten, the region where Jörg Haider, the contested leader of the FPÖ until 2005, was governor.¹ Perhaps also because of this geographical proximity, I recall that several public marches were organised in Friuli against the newly established Austrian government. Someone suggested taking the political action even further, for example by boycotting Austrian products imported by Italy, or avoiding Austria as a tourist destination that year.

Such was the political situation at the beginning of 2000, as I also personally experienced it. What I want to emphasise here is that at the time, the Austrian Freedom Party was considered an ‘unacceptable alternative’ by most of the official Europe and by part of the public opinion; and this despite the fact that the Austrian Freedom Party had been legitimately and democratically elected by a significant part of the Austrian electorate. Most of the reservations against the Freedom Party were related to its historical ties with National Socialism and to the party’s intolerant (at that time many called it blatantly racist) position on immigrants and ethnic minorities in general.

¹ Jörg Haider was extremely popular in Kärnten, where he was governor in two periods: from 1989-1991 and from 1999 until his death in October 2008 (reconfirmed at the regional election of 2004). In 2005 Jörg Haider and some of his supporters left the FPÖ to launch the Alliance for the Future of Austria (the *Bündnis Zukunft Österreich*, BZÖ). The new party got about 4 pct. of the votes at the 2006 parliamentary election and almost 11 pct. at the 2008 election.

In reality, some of the same considerations related to the ‘Austrian case’ could interest some of the countries that had approved the diplomatic sanctions. The Northern League in Italy, for example, supported some of the same anti-immigrant positions, pointing out the dangers associated with immigration flows from non-Western countries.

The Northern League had already been in government for a short period in 1994, with the centre-right government coalition led for the first time by Silvio Berlusconi, who in 1992 had launched the party Forza Italia (FI). But at that time in the 1990s, Northern League’s entrance into office had not provoked significant reactions from the international community, even if anti-immigration was already an important issue on the party agenda. In those years, the immigration issue had in fact reached the public opinion with the shocking and dramatic images of Albanian men and women who tried to reach the Italian shores in overcrowded old and decrepit boats. To resolve the emergence, a member of the Northern League suggested that a solution could be ‘to throw them overboard’.² However, the political situation in Italy in the 1990s was such that the rest of Europe did not seem concerned that the Northern League was in office. It was mainly considered the result of the popular protest against the political establishment that had grown out of the cases of political corruption and bribes that exploded in Italy in the early 1990s and which radically transformed the Italian political party system.

In 2001, only a few months after the Freedom Party came to power in Austria, the Northern League was again in office. Meanwhile, the party electoral support had shrunk significantly to only 4 pct. of the votes, but due to the Italian ‘mixed’ electoral system the Northern League achieved considerable influence in the new centre-right government (2001-2006).

In 2001 the League’s political profile had adjusted to the new times. In particular, following the increasing number of immigrants of non-Western origin that entered the country during the 1990s, the anti-immigration issue had taken a central place in the party politics. As for the Freedom Party in Austria, immigration was increasingly interpreted as a threat to the national identity and culture and a serious challenge to the Western values and principles, besides creating problems of security and law and order. Significantly, one of the first laws approved by the newly appointed government in 2001 was the new immigration law, which bore the names of Umberto Bossi, leader of the League, and of Gianfranco Fini, leader of National Alliance (AN). And as we will see in the following chapters, the modification of the immigration regime is not surprisingly one of the first tasks taken up by governments in which the radical right exerted a role of influence.

² See: ‘Il naufragio degli Albanesi e la giornalista Pivetti’, *La Repubblica*, 27 March 2007. It was Irene Pivetti who said this in 1997. Pivetti was leader of the Deputy Chamber in 1994. She was in the Northern League until 1996, when she was excluded by the party leadership because of her opposition to the secessionist politics that the Northern League started to support.

However, it was the electoral results in Scandinavia that perhaps clearly signalled that the new radical right wave was not a phenomenon that could be primarily ascribed to widespread political protest, anti-establishment feelings and national entrenched characteristics. When I came to Denmark in May 2000, the Danish People's Party was still considered a marginal party. Only a couple of years before, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the social democratic Prime Minister from 1994-2001, had declared during a parliamentary speech that the Danish People's Party would never become an acceptable actor in the Danish party system. He was wrong, like many others at the time. The party led by Pia Kjaersgaard was getting increasing support among voters. In particular, the way the party dealt with the immigration question seemed to me to answer to the increasing concern on this issue among sectors of the population.

When I arrived in Denmark the broadsheet *Information* was just publishing some interesting essays on the theme 'Pia's Danes'. The articles questioned who the supporters were and why they supported the party, trying to understand the reasons behind the vote, instead of labelling the Danish People's Party as a marginal phenomenon in Danish politics. In November 2001, the Danish People's Party got 12 pct. of the votes and 22 MPs. Even more significantly, in 2001 the Danish People's Party became a vital supporting partner to the Liberal and Conservative minority coalition government.

Several national and international media described the political influence achieved by the Danish People's Party as a black stain on the idyllic picture of the tolerant, democratic and open Scandinavian society. Somehow similarly to the FPÖ in Austria, the other parties, but in particular the centre-left-wing governments had tried to keep the party on the margins of Danish politics. The Danish People's Party had from the beginning expressed clearly and directly its commitment to safeguarding Danish identity, national belonging and cultural heritage. In particular, the party claimed that it was necessary to protect these values against the attacks firstly from the increasing number of non-Western immigrants and refugees in Denmark and secondly from the European integration process, considered to undermine Danish national sovereignty. The Danish People's Party appealed to people's wisdom and common sense to find the solution to the problems, contrasting it with the irresponsibility and political calculation of the political and intellectual elite.

Another thing was clear by the end of 2001: the strategies used to isolate and contain the Danish People's Party had failed and the radical right was actually more than a fleeting phenomenon. But even more than this, the Danish People's Party had become mainstream as reaffirmed by the last two parliamentary elections in the country.

What I briefly wanted to emphasise above, is the succession of the events that took place at the beginning of this century and which created the background behind the reflections that later shaped the present work. When at the end of 2001 I started to look at the radical right parties in Western Europe, I had not imagined that things would accelerate as they did in the

following years. What happened in Austria in 2001 was in reality only the tip of the iceberg that would have fully emerged in the years that followed. Other radical right parties later achieved important results either at the national or regional level, for instance the List Pim Fortuyn in Holland in 2002, the Vlaams Block/Vlaams Belang in Belgium, the SVP in Switzerland and so forth.

But this is not only a question of electoral success. In fact, not all the parties mentioned above have been able to achieve or uphold their electoral support. Some of them experienced an electoral decline; others regained it years later, while some were actually able to consolidate their position. A case in point is the FPÖ, whose electoral support dropped dramatically only a few years after the party had come into office, but in the recent election has regained electoral strength. Also in France, support to the Front National shrank significantly in 2007, changing the upward electoral curve achieved by the party and its leader Jean Marie Le-Pen at the previous elections. Things went differently for the Danish People's Party, undoubtedly the most successful radical right party in Western Europe today. This might suggest that the Danish party has been able to find the right political formula, allowing it to maintain political influence and decision-making power in Danish politics. Whether this model is 'exportable' to other national contexts is an interesting question, which will be discussed below.

However, what I consider both necessary and appealing in relation to the radical right studies today is to look at the way these parties have developed over time both ideologically and in relation to their voters. I find it much more interesting than to focus exclusively on the reasons for their success. This implies considering how the radical right has evolved through different phases of the parties' life time: breakthrough, exit from the margins, consolidation and government responsibility. Recent history has shown that the radical right – as any other party – is able to evolve, to transform and – whenever necessary – to adapt to new situations and conditions. This has to do not only with a party's organisational strategies, but also with party ideology. Party ideology and party politics are not a fixed 'unit', but can change and be influenced by different conditions, opportunities, as well as internal and external factors.

Until recently, the literature on the radical right has largely downplayed this kind of approach. The importance of macrostructural factors in shaping the radical right ideology has been one of the dominating paradigms to explain the radical right's electoral success. Increasing immigration flows to Europe, widespread anti-establishment and populist feelings and fear of social marginalisation are often mentioned as main explanations of the radical right support. This approach clearly privileges the demand side and the situational context created by the social and political opportunity structure at the national and international level. But it is also – at least in my view – to take a 'snap-shot' of the radical right party at a specific moment in time. It is perhaps at this point that my historical formation urges me to use an approach that looks at how these parties developed and tackled the challenges and opportunities that emerged during their 'life' process.

The ambition of this project is to achieve a better understanding of the radical right also in the light of these parties' more recent history by considering concrete case studies: the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party in the period from approx. the 1990s until 2008. In this period the third wave of radical right parties (Von Beyme 1988) accelerated and consolidated. This implies an investigation of how the three parties reacted to the political opportunities shaped by the national and international context, but also how the three parties' ideology was challenged by the different phases of 'exit from the margins', consolidation and maturity and by the incumbencies that come with government responsibility. Two of the parties, the Northern League and the Danish People's Party, made the passage from the margins to the mainstream with unexpected rapidity. This may also explain why particularly the Danish People's Party is still rather unknown to the international scholar community. To fill in this gap, I will devote more space in this study to the Danish People's Party.

Studying how these parties have developed also involves looking at the electorate and the way voters have endorsed and reacted to the politics developed by the three parties. In short, this study attempts to build a comparative analytical framework in which the 'supply side' (the parties and their ideology) and the 'demand side' (the voters) are considered in a close interrelationship. This will hopefully also allow us to map the developmental dynamics of the parties and to shed light on their similarities and differences, and help us understand whether their political evolution, particularly in the last decade, has brought them ideologically and electorally closer to each other.

The present study is structured into two main parts. The first part (Chapter 1-4) starts with an introduction to the three case studies and a critical assessment of the literature on the radical right (Chapter 1). The methodological and theoretical aspects are discussed in Chapter 2, together with an introduction to three main working approaches/hypotheses. Chapter 3 deals with the ideological dimensions on which the empirical analysis is based. Chapter 4 completes the reflections on method and approach, presenting a lifespan framework for the analysis of party ideology and party development, which is meant to represent support to the concrete observation of how parties tackled and 'performed' in major phases of their political life (e.g. emergence, consolidation, government responsibility).

The second part consists of the empirical analyses of the 'supply side', i.e. the ideological development of the three parties (Chapters 5-7), discussed separately in each chapter. This should allow the analyses of the three parties' ideology to unfold fully and to keep attention to the way the respective opportunity structures have affected their development. Chapter 8 deals with the electoral profile and the voters' attitudes (the demand side) in a comparative perspective, linking up to the dimensions and issues taken up in the empirical analysis of the three parties' ideology. A final and conclusive chapter reports in a more systematic comparative

way the similarities, differences and specificities characterising the three parties on the basis of the results and observations from the other chapters.

Acknowledgments

This research has ‘accompanied’ me for quite a long time, witnessing several passages of my life, starting shortly after my arrival in Denmark as freshly graduated from the University of Venice, Italy. When I came to Denmark my knowledge of the language and Danish society was very limited, not to say nonexistent. I believe that my opinion of the country was influenced by all the stereotypes that most Italians have of the Scandinavian people. It was challenging to be confronted with what one at that time could read and hear about the Danish People’s Party, its ideology and voters. Interestingly, this was all too similar to the opinions that in the same period characterised the ideology and voters of the Northern League in Italy and the Freedom Party in Austria. But despite the amount of articles and information written on these parties, my feeling was actually that most of it never really answered to the questions about what these parties were about and who supported them. I felt that explanations based on protest, marginalisation and on a ‘less complex’ cognitive framework of reference in relation to voters largely downplayed the significance and reasons of the vote for these parties. I started by research to understand more about the radical right parties in a national and cross-national perspective. This was and still is the challenging task.

I would have never been able to finish this research without the intellectual and moral support of all those who have helped along the way. I want to thank my tutor Jørgen Goul Andersen, whose knowledge and insight have helped me to understand several important aspects of the political and electoral development in Denmark. He has also been able to transmit his enthusiasm to research and to tackle the challenges of a comparative research. I owe a lot also to Ole Borre, whose long experience and encouragement have on several occasions been very precious to me, particularly to understand aspects of the electoral behaviour. I am very grateful for the support I have received over the years from my colleagues at the Institute of History and International Studies and in particular from the AMID fellows in Aalborg. I want to thank in particular Martin Bak Jørgensen and Ruth Emerek for reading and commenting on parts of this study. Many thanks also to Hans-Georg Betz for inspiring readings and collaboration.

Thanks to my beloved family, Kristian, Oscar and Philip, because they have always supported me. I want to dedicate this work to them and to my parents, who taught me how important it is to remember where I come from and who have always encouraged my intellectual curiosity.

For all that remains by way of mistakes and omissions, I bear of course alone full responsibility.

Susi Meret

October 2009

PART I THEORY, METHOD AND DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE THREE CASE STUDIES AND STATE OF THE ART SCHOLARLY RESEARCH ON THE RADICAL RIGHT

The chapter starts with a more detailed presentation of the Austrian Freedom Party, the Northern League and the Danish People's Party and their electoral results over time, reconstructing the events that in the relatively short period between 2000 and 2001 brought the three parties from the political margins of their respective party systems to the centre of the political decisional power. This represented an important step in the life-cycle of the parties, whose effects on ideology and on electoral support will be considered in later chapters. The following sections will also introduce a critical assessment of the (different) scholarly approaches studying the radical right parties in Western Europe; this will allow us to consider what kind of new perspectives and updates can be fruitfully added to this field in light of the new developments of the radical right.

1.1 Setting the context: the Austrian odd becomes mainstream

In February 2000, the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) succeeded in forming a 'black and blue' coalition together with the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) after 123 days of negotiation. The swearing in of the government, led by ÖVP candidate Wolfgang Schüssel, caused massive public interest and media coverage within and outside Austria. These events followed the results of the October 1999 elections, where the FPÖ, at the time led by the controversial leader Jörg Haider, gathered 27 pct. of the votes, becoming the second strongest electoral force in Austria after the historically strong SPÖ (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Electoral support for the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the BZÖ at the national level (1983-2008) with parliamentary mandates indicated in brackets. Percentage.

	1983	1986	1990	1994	1995	1999	2002	2006	2008
FPÖ	5 (12)	9.7 (18)	16.6 (33)	22.5 (42)	21.9 (40)	26.9 (52)	10 (19)	11 (21)	17.5 (34)
BZÖ	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	4.1 (7)	10.7 (21)
Total	5	9.7	16.6	22.5	21.9	26.9	10	15.1	28.2

Source: Republik Österreich Bundesministerium für Inneres.

Although the Austrian Freedom Party's entrance into government was a legitimate consequence of democratic elections, the result triggered the threatened diplomatic boycott from the other EU-14 members, resulting in reduced bilateral contacts to Austria outside of formal EU

meetings. This measure was later justified as follows: ‘(...) the admission of the FPÖ into a coalition government legitimises the extreme right in Europe’ (Pelinka 2001:12).³

The reaction from Europe was partly explained by the FPÖ uncomfortable historical legacies in National Socialism and positions on immigration issues and questions of identity and belonging. For this reason, the party had for long been considered a pariah by most of the Austrian political establishment. It had not always been like this. In the 1980s, the FPÖ had developed a clearly neo-liberal profile under the liberal leadership of Norbert Steger. But when Jörg Haider took over the party leadership in September 1986, the FPÖ made a clear turn to the right, rewarding the more radical right wing in the party.

As a consequence of this evolution, the SPÖ and the ÖVP pursued a clear strategy of containment (*cordoine sanitaire*) in the following years to keep the Freedom Party away from political influence. This was apparently not enough to prevent the Austrian Freedom Party from challenging the mainstream parties, by appealing to those electoral segments that were politically dissatisfied with the status quo and looked for a political alternative. In 1999, more than one out of four Austrians saw in Haider someone else than the dangerous right wing extremist with Nazi sympathies and an uncomfortable past, as he was often portrayed by the domestic and international press (see e.g. Zöchling 1999; Luverà 2000). The vote for the party had clear regional differences and was higher in *Kärnten* where Haider was also governor⁴ (see Table 1.2 below).

Table 1.2 Electoral support to the FPÖ (and BZÖ) at the regional level (1996-2008). Percentages.

	FPÖ 1995-96	FPÖ 1999	FPÖ 2002	FPÖ 2006	BZÖ	FPÖ 2008	BZÖ
Burgenland	6.9	21.0	6.3	8.6	1.7	16.2	5.3
Kärnten	32.7	38.6	23.6	7.2	24.9	7.6	38.5
Niederösterreich	17.3	22.4	6.9	9.6	2.2	18.1	6.3
Oberösterreich	21.6	26.8	10.4	12.2	2.6	19	9.1
Salzburg	25.4	29.3	10.7	12.2	3.1	17.7	12.2
Steiermark	21.2	29.2	9.6	10.4	3.1	17.3	13.2
Tirol	27.0	28.0	9.9	10.8	3.2	17.0	9.7
Voarlberg	27.4	30.1	12.9	10.9	3.2	16.1	12.8
Wien	20.1	24.7	7.9	13.8	1.8	20.4	4.7
National level	21.9	26.9	10	11	4.1	17.5	10.7

Source: Republik Österreich Bundesministerium für Inneres.

³ The sanctions were lifted in September 2000 after an expert report submitted to the EU had declared that the measures were effective only in the short run, but that they could give rise to anti-EU reactions in the long run (cf. Hummer and Pelinka 2002).

⁴ Jörg Haider’s popularity in Kärnten was so strong that voters followed him when in 2005 he decided to leave the FPÖ and launched the party Alliance for the Future of Austria (Bündnis Zukunft Österreich, BZÖ). The party achieved 10.7 pct. of the votes at the 2008 elections, in Kärnten 38.5 pct. A few weeks after the election, Jörg Haider died in a car accident near Klagenfurt.

Electoral surveys carried out in 1999-2000 showed that among the most important reasons for the vote to the FPÖ the electorate indicated: 1) the wish for a system change and 2) the party's anti-immigration position (Plasser and Ulram 2000: 229-230). Many Austrian voters wanted to express their distrust in the political system and their resentment against the privileges accumulated by the parties of the Great Coalition over the years, by voting for the Austrian Freedom Party, which they perceived as an alternative to 'politics as usual'. At the same time, feelings of apprehension and fear of global dynamics of social and economic change worried some sectors of the electorate that seemed to find an answer in the politics and ideology developed by the FPÖ.

The FPÖ responded to the existing socio-economic and political situation by developing a programme that matched the demands of parts of the Austrian electorate at that particular period of time. But significantly, the party had now achieved a position of political influence and government responsibility from where to accomplish concrete political results. After the FPÖ entered government, its support withered and it suffered a heavy defeat in the 2002 election. Apparently, the party had not been able to take full advantage of its influential position and to combine the duties and responsibilities associated with a position in government with its populist strategies (see Heinisch 2003). This is something that will be discussed in the following chapters.

The FPÖ's influential position was soon imitated by other parties with a less uncomfortable past, but similar – particularly anti-immigration – issues on the agenda. One of these was the Northern League in Italy.

1.2 The Northern League in Italy

The Northern League (LN) entered government only a few months after the FPÖ, when the echo of the Austrian elections could still be heard. The politics supported by the Italian party also created concern in the rest of Europe. The Northern League has no legacies in Italian post-war fascism, but the party increasingly focussed on the anti-immigration question, cultivating the populist and anti-establishment rhetoric that has characterised the party from the beginning. The Northern League exploited the fear of new immigration flows, using immigrants as scapegoats for a number of national problems such as rising criminality, rape, unemployment and national security. The party also increasingly emphasized cultural differences and national and regional identity, particularly when referring to Islam and the differences between Muslim and Western Christian culture. This indicated a change of focus in the Northern League's anti-immigration policy, suggesting a growing ideological convergence with other radical right parties in Europe.

It was in particular the Northern League's anti-immigration policy that worried the rest of the EU on the eve of the 2001 parliamentary elections.⁵ For reasons that will be discussed in Chapter 6, the Northern League was facing electoral decline (see Table 1.3) and this situation forced the party to find a new political strategy. The Northern League thus looked for new political niches that could respond to the dilemmas posed by increasing globalisation and inter-cultural relations in connection with increasing immigration from non-Western countries.

Table 1.3 Electoral results for the Northern League (LN) at the national level (1987-2008). Percentages and seats in Deputy Chamber and Senate in brackets

LN	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008
Deputy Chamber	8.6 (55)	8.3 (117)	10.1 (59)	3.9 (30)	4.5 (26)	8.3 (60)
Senate	8.2 (25)	8.1 (60)	10.4 (27)	2.7 (17)	4.4 (13)	8.1 (25)

Source: Ministero dell'Interno (<http://elezionistorico.interno.it/>).

In 2001 the party dropped below the proportional threshold of 4 pct. (cf. Table 1.3 above), but according to Italian electoral law, a combination of a majority and a proportional system, the party was still able to join the centre-right coalition formed by Berlusconi's party *Forza Italia* (*Forza Italia*, FI) and the party National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale*, AN).

The Northern League was at that time – and still is – primarily a political phenomenon rooted in the regions of Northern Italy. This means that the electoral support to the party has always been significantly higher in these regions than at the national level (see Table 1.4 below). At the 2001 election the LN had also lost votes from the party's traditionally strong constituencies of the North such as Lombardy and Veneto (cf. Table 1.4), for reasons that will be dealt with in the following chapters. However, the political influence the party had achieved within the centre-right coalition was by no means politically insignificant. At the beginning of the legislature in 2001, the party obtained two major ministerial posts with portfolio (the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Services) and one non-cabinet ministry without portfolio (Institutional Reforms and Devolution), taken by Bossi.⁶

⁵ Just before the elections, Belgian vice Prime Minister Michel warned Italy about the same diplomatic sanctions applied to Austria, if the Northern League came into government. But since the sanctions against Austria had only brought critique and widespread anti-EU feelings, the –at that time– President of the European Commission, Italian Romano Prodi, decided to drop the question. However, it was clear that the FPÖ was not a unique case in Europe that could be contained by diplomatic measures against the country.

⁶ The third part of the right wing coalition, *Alleanza Nazionale*, was appointed four ministerial positions: three with portfolio (vice-prime ministry, Agriculture, Environment) and one without (Ministry for the Italians Abroad).

Table 1.4 Electoral support for the Northern League in the Northern regions and central Italy (1992-2006). Chamber of Deputy. Percentages.

	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008
Valle d'Aosta	.	.	8.1	.	1.9	3
Piemonte	16.3	16.2	18.4	6.0	6.4	12.6
Liguria	14.3	11.4	10.2	3.9	3.7	6.8
Lombardia	23.0	22.6	24.8	11.3	11.2	20.7
Trentino A. Adige	8.9	7.5	13.2	3.6	4.5	9.4
Veneto	17.8	21.6	29.8	10.5	10.9	26.7
Friuli-V.G.	15.3	16.9	23.2	8.2	7.1	13
Emilia Romagna	9.6	6.4	7.2	2.6	3.9	7.7
Toscana	3.1	2.2	1.8	0.6	1	2
Marche	1.3	.	1.5	.	1	2.2
Umbria	1.1	.	1.0	.	0.7	1.6

Source: Ministero dell'Interno (<http://politiche.interno.it>).

Considering the LN's poor electoral results in the late 1990s and in 2001, the party's increasingly anti-immigrant and inward looking positions can be understood as an attempt to find new issues after the old ones had apparently weakened their salience. In this sense, the fact that the League is still politically and electorally anchored in the geographical North of Italy should not overshadow the fact that the party has in the last decade come significantly closer to the anti-immigration and populist radical right than for instance the party National Alliance, which has followed a path towards more traditional conservative right positions.

However this does not mean that the Northern League is a single-issue party, as it has been suggested in relation to several other radical right parties because of the central role that the anti- immigration issue now plays on their agenda and in their electoral appeal.

As we will see in the following chapters, tax protest, the North/South question and the populist attacks on the political establishment continued to play an important role in the Northern League's political agenda and rhetoric and are still strategically emphasised whenever the party is in opposition. It is interesting how the LN politics and its populist and protest image have been influenced by the party's government participation from 2001-2006 (and now again from 2008). The question is also related to voters' perception of the party and its politics, since government incumbencies and the close relationship to the political elite have presumably affected the image of the Northern League as a radical alternative to the establishment. This also questions the perception of the party more as an anti-establishment or anti-immigrant party.

1.3 The Danish People's Party

The third case study is the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*, DF). At the Danish parliamentary elections in November 2001, the Danish People's Party got 12 pct. of the votes and

gained an influential role in the Liberal and Conservative government that ousted the Social Democrats (*Socialdemokraterne*, S) and Social Liberals (*Radikale Venstre*, RV) from office. The Danish People's Party is at present the third-largest political party in Denmark (see Table 1.5) and most remarkably the most clear-cut working class party in Danish politics today.

Table 1.5 Electoral support and parliamentary mandates for the FrP and the DF (1973-2007). Percentages.

	1973	1975	1977	1979	1981	1984	1987	1988	1990	1994	1998	2001	2005	2007
FrP	15.9 (28)	13.6 (24)	14.6 (26)	11 (20)	8.9 (16)	3.6 (6)	4.8 (9)	9 (16)	6.4 (12)	6.4 (11)	2.4 (4)	0.6 (0)	.	.
DF	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	7.4 (13)	12 (22)	13.3 (24)	13.9 (25)
Tot	15.9	13.6	14.6	11	8.9	3.6	4.8	9	6.4	6.4	9.8	12.6	13.3	13.9

Source: Danish statistical yearbooks.

The party is the successor of the Danish Progress Party (*Fremskridtspartiet*, FrP), which was one of the pioneers that transformed the Danish political landscape at the beginning of the 1970s. To describe the DF as a political and ideological continuation of the now defunct Progress Party is only partly right (see Chapter 5). Still, all five founders of the Danish People's Party in 1995 were former members of the Progress Party.

At the 2001 election, the Danish People's Party achieved a positive electoral result despite particularly the left wing parties' strategies to keep the party at the margins of the political system. Especially from 1996-2001, the DF was often portrayed as an extreme right wing party with racist/xenophobic features.

According to the social democrat Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Danish Prime Minister from 1994-2001, the DF would never become a respectable party in the Danish political system.⁷ In 2006, the opinion had changed significantly. As the new social democratic leader, Helle Thorning-Schmidt observed in 2006, the Danish People's Party is 'a typical right wing party', with which the Social Democrats could work on different welfare issues (Information 08-08-2006). The Danish People's Party had evidently come in from the cold.

From the very beginning, the DF has emphasised the economic, cultural and social dangers posed by immigrants and refugees of non-Western origin to the Danish nation. In the 2001 electoral campaign, the party insisted on the need to tighten up the country's immigration regime and to tackle the question of how to integrate ethnic minorities in Danish society. Today, the party increasingly focuses on the need to safeguard Western values and principles against the threat represented by Islam. In recent years, the party has promoted itself as defender of the liberal values and principles of the West. It mentions freedom of expression,

⁷ Poul Nyrup Rasmussen words, addressed to the DF MPs in Parliament in October 1999, have become famous: 'Therefore I say to the Danish People's Party: no matter how many efforts you make, for me you will never become respectable (*stuerene*) enough', address at the Parliament, October 1999.

open-mindedness, tolerance, solidarity and work ethic as Western fundamental values that ethnic minorities are expected to understand, respect and accept if they want to be integrated. Interestingly, the Danish People's Party has profiled itself on gender equality and rights to women of ethnic minorities. Women wearing the Muslim veil have become emblematic for the party's position and its way of dealing with and discussing these issues. As the following chapters will clarify, this indicates another and interesting stage of the ideological development of this party.

1.4 Some reflections about party life course and the different stages of development

Being part of government does not in itself guarantee electoral success and continued support. The fact that the three parties had different experiences in government and achieved different results indicates that political incumbencies can have different impacts on the political consolidation or decline of this kind of parties. This also means that if the immigration grievance helped these parties to get political influence, the different conditions and challenges they met while in government produced different effects, which need to be more carefully examined.

Until now, very little research has been done in this area. In the 1990s, the scholarly interest was mainly focussed on explaining the radical right's breakthrough and success. The comparative approaches dealt primarily with isolated case studies limited to relatively short time spans concentrating on the periods of major success. Instead, this study focuses on how the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party have tackled the different stages of development, where the last phase is represented by their experience with government incumbencies.

In terms of influence, it is also interesting to look at the parties' impact on their surroundings. The radical right political agenda, rhetoric and electoral support seem to have affected governments to appease anti-immigration attitudes by pursuing more severe restrictions on immigration laws and integration regimes. A path that has been followed also at the European level, where the endorsement of politics of containment and control of legal and illegal migration flows have become an important issue on the EU's political agenda.

This development confirms the importance of the political opportunity structure in shaping the development of the radical right. What happens if mainstream parties co-opt some of the radical right's restrictive positions on immigration? And how have mainstream parties responded to the challenges advanced by the radical right parties when they entered into government? Again, such considerations fit well into the scenario of the three case studies. In the period considered, the three parties have in fact gone through what we could consider the main phases in the life of a party: breakthrough, consolidation, political influence and government responsibility. It is interesting to look at the way the three parties have tackled, overcome, failed and reacted to the different stages of this development. It is also a way to see how close they have come and where their ideology and electoral support still distinguish

them as the specific ‘product’ of the demands, opportunities and situation emerging in the political systems at the national level.

The perspective of different stages of development in the life course of a radical right party also affects the perception of their role in the political scenario. Radical right parties are not necessarily marginal actors on the extreme fringes of the political system. The fact that some of them have undoubtedly become mainstream in terms of electoral support, political influence, responsibilities and decision making activity has undoubtedly also had an effect on the way these parties are classified, considered and designated. The following section deals with the different approaches that have been used to frame the phenomenon first of all in terms of terminology and classification.

At this stage of the study, it is also important to look at the different approaches that characterise the scholarly literature in order to understand how the radical right parties have been studied and what results have been achieved in this field. The term ‘radical right’ also deserves a more thorough explanation. As we will see, there is by no means agreement on this, neither among members, voters, the parties, nor among academics and researchers.

1.5 Framing reality: problems of definition and scholarly disagreement in the classification of the phenomenon

Above, the Danish People’s Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party were introduced as belonging to the radical right. However, a large body of literature shows that scholars still disagree on how to classify and group these parties.

Looking at the three case studies, two of them, the Danish People’s Party and the Northern League are relatively new political actors within the respective political systems. The Austrian Freedom Party has historical roots back to the 1950s, but the party went through significant transformations and restructurings in the 1980s and 1990s. We therefore have to ask whether the definition of radical right fits the three cases and what meaning and implications the term radical right has and how it has changed over time.

International comparisons of contemporary radical right parties tend to focus on the nature of such parties and the reasons of their breakthrough from the mid-1980s.⁸ The focus on the radical right’s electoral success has influenced the research field of political right wing radicalism/ extremism to such an extent that there is a general lack of updates, new theoretical approaches and contributions on recent developments and often different paths of these parties, particularly in a comparative framework (De Lange & Mudde 2005). Few studies have attempted to analyse the role of the radical right parties as active contributors to decision making processes. In particular the policy effects of the radical right’s interaction with the other

⁸ This new wave of right wing politics started with the European elections in France in 1984, where the Front National got more than 10 pct. of the votes. The result was a few years later followed by the Republikaner in Germany with 7.5 pct. of the votes at the regional elections in Berlin and 7.1 pct. at the European elections.

established parties has until recently been insufficiently addressed (with few exceptions, see e.g. Minkenberg 2001).

Another problem is the long debated and never really resolved discussion about how to appropriately define these parties. The terminological debate has nourished what I would define an essentialist approach, which in some cases has become blind to the ideological development of these parties (see also Mc Gann and Kitschelt 2005: 148) and to the combination of different ideological typologies, which entail the use of different variants of right wing radicalism (on this see Minkenberg 2008: 14-15).

An essentialist approach can be observed in the widespread scholarly preference for the two classical definitions of *extreme right wing* and *radical right wing* parties. The origin of right wing extremism is studies of fascism, whose theoretical framework was mainly applied to study Western European fascist movements and parties of the post-World War II period. The label has been widely used in Western Europe, even though some scholars who use this terminology often recognize that several of the features traditionally attributed to this term no longer apply to most of the parties today.

The adjective *extreme* originally referred to parties with historical and ideological roots in fascism, which placed them at the extreme right of the traditional left-right political dimension. A feature of these parties was their anti-systemic position, which often meant refusal of parliamentary democracy and opposition to the rules of the party system as such (see e.g. Ignazi 1992; Merkl and Weinberg 1997). Clearly, the involvement of several of these parties in government activities makes 'right wing extremism' in the above mentioned sense sound anachronistic. Even if a party can be placed on the far right on a number of issues (for example immigration) it does not automatically make it undemocratic and unconstitutional.

The *extreme right* definition often competes with another widely used term, *right wing radicalism*. The label appeared for the first time in the 1950s in connection with McCarthyism and was later used also to describe the phenomenon of Birchism (see e.g. Bell 1964; Lipset and Raab 1970). These movements were mainly characterised by strong conservatism and a fervent anticommunism, but they did not challenge the democratic rules of the system. This has made the use of this term less problematic and particularly widespread in the Anglo-Saxon world. Over the years, the distinction between the two definitions has slowly faded out, however, and scholars today tend to use the two labels interchangeably also in relation to the same party.

The 'one world' approach, as Minkenberg (2008: 14) appropriately calls the attempt of some scholars to postulate one generic phenomenon (which mainly refers to political parties rather than movements) described as extreme or radical in relation to its surroundings, has been followed by the 'many worlds' approach. This approach has become clear with the construction of new 'composed' labels that started to be attached to single definitions. In my opinion, this also signalled a certain dissatisfaction with the traditional classifications, but also that the 'phenomenon' was developing and taking new forms. In what Cas Mudde effectively

called ‘the war of words’, more than 26 different definitions and descriptions of right wing extremist ideology were counted in the radical right literature in the mid 1990s (Mudde 1995; see also Mudde 1996). Several scholars adopted more specific terms, indicating what they considered the most relevant features of a party at the time of observation. I quote the most relevant: anti-immigration parties (with variants such as xenophobic, ethno-nationalist parties) (Van Der Brug, Fennema & Tillie 2000), new post-industrial extreme right parties (Ignazi 2000: 55), new authoritarian right wing parties (Inglehart and Flanagan 1987; Kitschelt 1995) and more recently nativist right (Betz 2009; Betz and Meret 2009). The definitions highlight: 1) the importance of the anti-immigration issue giving these parties a specific content; 3) the populist and anti-establishment feature referred to the political style and attitude towards the status quo; 3) the relationship of this phenomenon to the structural transformation of contemporary societies. The point that I want to emphasise here is that the approach highlighted what was happening to these parties in terms of ideological transformation and development, which made the use of traditional classifications much less satisfactory. This also underlined an aspect which for long has been neglected by scholars and researchers, namely the dynamic character of these parties and their great capacity to adapt to new conditions.

A distinction between an old and a new extreme/radical right was already formulated by Ignazi (1992; 2000), who distinguished between the old *traditional extreme right* and the new *postindustrial extreme right*. Ignazi argues that the difference between the two groups is related to major structural changes in society and in politics. As we will examine carefully in the following sections, a major strain of the contemporary analysis considers the recent breakthrough and development of these parties a consequence of the macro-structural and long-term changes in Western societies and brought about by the processes of globalisation and post-industrialisation. These changes are considered to have favoured the decline of traditional established party ties, resulting in the emergence of new groups of voters, who are generally more inclined to listen to political messages emphasising problems of rising immigration, crime rates, increasing cultural and religious diversity and growing interdependence of the labour markets.

The position at the right of the political spectrum is today also considered in relation to the identitary, cultural and value positions supported by these parties. But this is not the only interpretation. In France and Italy, for instance, the term *Nouvelle droite/Nuova destra* is used to designate the right wing intellectual movement started in France during the late 1970s at the initiative of right wing intellectuals, among them Alain de Benoist, who formulated a critique of the extreme right ideology, particularly in relation to racial differences. In short, the movement promoted a new approach that considered politics of difference a value to defend against the homogenising forces of globalisation, but within the democratic rules available in Western democratic and parliamentary systems. The Nouvelle Droite maintained that it was necessary to abandon references to a racial hierarchy and to put specific emphasis on ‘difference’ (see Taguieff 1987). The French Front National later embraced these ideas and devel-

oped strong ethnocentric arguments that some scholars see as the ‘master frame’, which diffused in the late 1990s throughout the populist right in a process of ‘crossnational learning’ (Rydgren 2005). This frame to a large extent derived its ideological force from an ethnonational discourse, which explicitly rejected the association with traditional racism. A proof of the other parties’ receptivity to the example established by the Front National and/or by other parties during the 1990s is found in their ideology, rather than in the contacts or professional friendship among the party ‘entrepreneurs’.

But similarities between parties do not imply a personal acquaintance among their members or an open declaration of ideological influence. Alternatively, as Pia Kjærsgaard replied in 2002 to a question from the press about the party’s possible connections to the Front National, the answer can be simply that:

It is not because we [DF] do not like having good discussions with politicians or parties from other countries [but] we have not had the time and energy to start such a contact. [...] we have had enough to do with Denmark and on Danish politics. (Kjærsgaards ugebrev 11-03-2002)

In conclusion, both old and new labels are disappointing when applied to a specific case. In this sense, it can be debated how accurately the definition of radical right parties, which is used in this study, can define and classify the Danish People’s Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party. Indeed, what radical right means today is still open to debate. However, partly for the reasons explained before, the label radical right is more accommodating to new developments in these parties. Certainly, it is less problematic than far/extreme right and less ‘saturated’ than that of new/ populist right.

In reality, I would argue, the difficulty of choosing a term is often the result of the definitional approach itself, where the main attempt is to explain different aspects of a phenomenon by means of a (necessarily) schematic method. But this also means that little space is generally left for an update. At a certain point in time, a too tight definition of concepts and conditions lags ‘historically’ behind in relation to the development of the reality that has to be investigated.

Therefore, the aim of this study is not to decide what concept is more correct, but rather to consider the empirical development of the three case studies and to see whether different concepts can be descriptively useful. In this sense, how the Danish People’s Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party can be classified is mainly left to the empirical research, rather than considered a definitional question. This is one of the reasons why the use of the term radical right is not in itself considered problematic for this study. This of course does not resolve the question about what precisely the two words ‘radical’ and ‘right’ indicate separately, together and in relation to the political space considered. But also in this case the empirical analysis can help to show where the terminology fits best and where it goes wrong. Even by using more words to clarify this question I doubt that I would be able to put a lid on the ‘war of words’.

1.6 A critical state of the art: contemporary studies of the radical right in Western Europe

What first jumps out when reading the literature on the radical right is the emphasis on feelings of resentment, reaction and discontent, which are considered to have emerged in relation to major socioeconomic processes, political conditions and cultural conflicts. A first critical observation in relation to this approach is the risk of adopting a sort of self-feeding interpretation, where the reason behind the radical right support (the fear) is both the result and the indicator of the rising anomie in contemporary Western European societies (on this cf. also Schain et al. 2002: 10-11).

A vote for a radical right party due to marginalisation, resentment, or protest can be very unpredictable in the long run. It is partly in order to avoid electoral volatility that a party's political strategy and its competitiveness on the political market (e.g. through *ad hoc* political programmes and a well-established and reliable organisation) are important factors for the consolidation of electoral support. Since much of the literature has until recently concentrated on the analysis of the parties' electoral breakthrough, we know very little about the development of these parties in the most recent phases. The time is ripe to look at their development, influence and ideological transformations across time and comparatively in the different countries.⁹ This does not mean that there is a lack of publications on the topic. Particularly in the last decade, a plethora of studies and analyses have been published on the radical right in Europe, although only few of them have a comparative approach (De Lange & Mudde 2005). However, there is still little consensus about: 1) the reasons for the radical right electoral support (see e.g. Norris 2005) and 2) the implications and consequences for these parties' emergence, but particularly their development and policy effect on the dynamics of party competition and party politics (see e.g. Schain et al. 2002; Minkenberg 2001).

Analyses of singular national cases, where radical right parties are considered separately from one another are still very widespread. The emergence and electoral support of a party are in this case explained within a specific national context and little attention is given to theoretical and empirical frameworks used for similar parties in other countries. This kind of literature has given some *ad hoc* explanations, which fit the situation in the individual country, at least at the time of observation, but do not really contribute to the understanding of the similarities and differences with radical right parties in the rest of Europe. Furthermore, most of the edited volumes that use a comparative framework in reality contain country-specific contributions, while the comparative task is limited to the introductory chapter. These studies are for the most part written by several experts with specific knowledge of the country in question

⁹ Research on the radical right is moving in this direction. Already today a number of books and workshop panels focus more explicitly on the ideological, organizational and electoral development of the radical right in relation to their lifecycle and evolution. See e.g. the workshop panels on Right-wing Radical Parties at the ECPR session in Potsdam, September 2009.

and of its political system (e.g. Hainsworth 2000; Perrineau 2001; more recently also Rydgren et al. 2004).

The same approach characterises several single authored monographs (see e.g. Ignazi 2000; Mudde 2000), where case-studies are put into country-specific chapters. A number of articles and PhD dissertations adopt a comprehensive and more explicit comparative approach to explain the emergence and development of contemporary Western European radical right parties (see e.g. Mudde 2007) and very few studies include Central and Eastern European cases (cf. Mudde 2005).

Surprisingly few have used both qualitative and quantitative data (however cf. Betz 1994; Kitschelt 1995; Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 2000; Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 2002). The research is still dominated by quantitative analyses of available electoral and/or international survey data, while more qualitative comparisons of party ideology based on a comprehensive analysis of the party literature such as programs, manifestoes and journal articles are very sporadic, not to say almost absent.

There are different reasons for the lack of this kind of studies, but one motive is certainly that party literature can be difficult to find and in some cases even more difficult to understand, particularly when it is written in a minor language. This is also a rather pragmatic way to explain why some radical right parties are today more studied than others. Quantitative data and in particular international survey packages like Eurobarometer surveys, the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the European Social Survey data (ESS) are easily accessible and have the strong advantage of referring to the same questionnaires, making equivalent variables easily comparable for the different countries. Despite the demands formulated by several scholars in recent years for better comparative analytical frameworks considering the radical right parties in a broadly historical and transnational context, there is still a general lack of this kind of studies, particularly considering how the phenomenon has developed in recent years.

As regards the theoretical framework, the macro-structural approach is undoubtedly the most widespread. Macro-societal transformations such as post-industrialism and globalisation are often considered as main explanatory factors in the rise of an electoral demand from constituencies which are likely to vote for a radical right party.

This approach is counterbalanced by a supply-side explanation, which focuses on the political opportunity structure and on party competition, paying more attention to the influences determined by local or meso-level factors (cf. Eatwell 2000). This approach focuses on the opportunities created by the action and programmes of mainstream parties, together with the conditions of the country-specific political institution and electoral system. The latter has an important function particularly in the electoral breakthrough phase of the radical right. The proportional system is considered to facilitate the rise of new radical right parties, for example when combined with a lower electoral threshold of representation in parliament. Majoritarian first-past-the-post electoral systems tend to reward strong and already established parties at

the expense of newcomers. Proportional electoral systems can also help the rise of new radical right parties (and new parties in general) by benefiting the consensus politics associated with this system in several Western European democracies (see Kriesi et al. 2008: 43).

The political opportunity structure also refers to party competition strategies, where the rise of the radical right parties can be explained as the result of the convergence/clustering of mainstream parties towards the middle to increase the electoral support by attracting the more moderate electorate. This restructuring of the political space is often considered one of the conditions that create new political opportunities for the emergence of new political parties. The convergence towards the centre by mainstream parties trying to conquer the moderate electorate can for example open new spaces at the margins. In this case, other parties have the opportunity to exploit the spaces on the extreme right and the extreme left of the political spectrum. It is a scenario that is more likely to take place when the political demand is less polarised and influenced by class voting and more dependent on broader issues related to, e.g., life chances, individual experiences, personal beliefs and attitudes. Investing in issues that have electoral appeal can give parties the support and visibility they are looking for.

Put shortly, the political opportunity structure approach offers important insights for understanding the single national cases, but leaves open the question about the development of these parties, particularly within a broader comparative perspective. Can similar theories and explanations effectively interpret what has taken place in different socio-political settings? This is one of the questions that will be addressed in the following chapters.

The critical review of (part of) the existing literature on the radical right thus revealed that although there is an interest in comparative analytical frameworks that can help explain the apparently increasing ideological convergence among radical right parties in Western Europe, not much has (yet) happened in the field. In particular, the focus on electoral success and single cases still prevails over an approach privileging these parties' development over time and perhaps also the fact that several of them are nowadays much more mainstream than marginal actors in the respective countries. Moreover, there have been few attempts to connect the supply side (the parties) to the demand side (the voters) in order to see what kind of dynamics and reciprocal feedbacks come from their interaction.

The present study will look at the radical right in a comparative perspective by means of an approach considering both the dynamic development of the parties over time and the interplay between their ideology and the profile and attitudes of their voters. The following chapter discusses the method, approach and design of this study.

2. ABOUT THE METHOD AND THE COMPARATIVE DESIGN

2.1 Methodological reflections and the advantages of the comparative approach

One of the aspects emerging from the first readings of the literature on the radical right is the frequent remark about the lack of in-depth comparative analyses and at the same time the encouragement directed to the scientific community to fill in this gap.

From this perspective, the analysis of the ideology and electoral support of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party offered the opportunity to deal with a comparative study of the development of the radical right in the context of three Western European affluent societies.¹⁰ The decision to deal with these three case-studies was not only a pragmatic choice deriving from my personal experience and knowledge of the three countries, as partly suggested in the preface to this study. Other aspects support the choice of precisely these three case studies. In terms of size, the three parties refer to geographically limited contexts, which in terms of population have until recently been rather homogeneous. This needs an explanation. Austria and Denmark are both small, developed democracies when considered in a Western European context, whereas Italy's geographical and demographic size are significantly reduced, considering that the political space of the Northern League is mainly limited to the Italian Northern regions (see Table 1.4, chapter 1). Furthermore, in all three cases, immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon and even if the size of the migration flows to the country and the share of the foreign born population are different from country to country, the immigration grievances started to be seriously felt in all three countries during the mid 1980s.

Already at a first approach, it is thus possible to point at a number of societal conditions that have created roughly similar latent political opportunities for the breakthrough and development of the radical right.¹¹ However, there are also significant differences in the way the societal conditions were used and mobilised at the political level. They are highly dependent on the way national politics are structured and on the possibilities that are created at the institutional level (organisation and structure of the political system, electoral threshold for representation at parliament, coalition opportunities etc.) and at the socio-economic level (for instance in relation to the welfare state).

Significant for the selection of the three parties was also the fact that by 2001, the FPÖ, the Northern League and the Danish People's Party had gone through several of the vital phases of a party lifecycle, briefly described as: the breakthrough phase, the consolidation phase and the phase of political influence and government responsibility. Compared to other radical right parties in other countries, which still have a marginal position, this allowed me to

¹⁰ In the case of the Northern League, this is particularly true if the geopolitical reality considered is Northern Italy with low unemployment and highly industrialized districts, which are often also the electoral strongholds of the party. Interestingly, this makes the 'size' of the country and its social reality much less different from the other two countries.

¹¹ Evidence for this is for example the political influence and responsibility achieved by the three parties between 2000 and 2001.

pinpoint some specific dynamics of development, for example: 1) how party ideology and electoral support have been influenced through the different phases of party development; 2) whether it is possible to see a growing ideological and electoral convergence among the three parties and what distinguishes them; 3) consider how the three parties tackled the phase of political responsibility and governmental participation and how it has influenced them in terms of ideology and electoral profile.

The ambition of this study is to be able to tackle the aspects above by relating in a comparative framework the *supply*-side, consisting of party ideology and party positioning on a number of relevant issues, to the *demand side*, represented by the radical right electoral profile and attitudes. In view of the different dimensions included in this study, it was necessary to consider what are the main issues and aspects to look at when considering ideology, electoral profile and attitudes, also in order to give a better structure to the analysis. Below, three main hypotheses or approaches are introduced, representing an initial guideline for the comparative framework that will be used as reference when analysing the three parties' literature and their electorate.

2.2 Main explanation for the radical right ideology and electoral support

To be able to structure and finalise the comparative analysis of the empirical cases, it has been necessary to define an interpretative framework to structure and ease the analyses of party ideology and electoral profile, and to find a number of main common dimensions. The comparative study of the three radical right parties has therefore been related to three main interpretations, whose implications are briefly introduced in Table 2.1 (see Table 2.1 next page).

The first column reports some the main characteristics of a specific interpretation, the second column the main implications of the hypothesis in relation to party ideology and the third column the main characteristics and implications of the electoral profile. The content of the columns refers to characteristics and aspects which are often mentioned and underlined in studies of the radical right and in connection with the three parties considered here. However, at this initial stage of the analysis, the implications on the two levels of party ideology and party electoral profile are necessarily and only broadly formulated.

The three main interpretations considered are: 1) the new social and political cleavage hypothesis; 2) the protest and anti-establishment hypothesis; 3) the globalisation and marginalisation hypothesis. These are also the main explanations formulated by the scholarly literature when explaining the radical right electoral breakthrough. Keeping them separate makes it possible to emphasise some of their specific characteristics and implications in a more explicit way; a task that otherwise could be difficult.

The three hypotheses do not necessarily suggest a progressive and linear development for the radical right and some of their characteristics, implications and consequences can in reality overlap. Anyway, the present hypothesis, which will be more clearly explained below, is that the generalised decline of traditional cleavages (indicating in particular party identifica

Table 2.1 The three hypotheses and some of their main implications.

Hypotheses	General characteristics	Implications on radical right party ideology	Implications on radical right electoral support
<i>New social and political cleavages and the post-materialist/libertarian vs. the materialist/authoritarian dimension</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergence of new political cleavages. - Declining relevance of traditional. economic/class politics and emergence of new cultural and value issues. - Intensification of party competition on non-economic issues. - Double dimensionality of the political space: old vs. new politics; materialist vs. postmaterialist values; traditional authoritarian values and behaviour vs. libertarian values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Exclusionary and nativist politics: emphasis on nation, community, belonging, traditional values and principles. -Capitalization of the fear for the different/Other. -Respect for authority, self-discipline, frugality, commitment of the individual to the group/community, intolerance over for diversity. -Support for traditional, hierarchical moral values. -“Ownership” of specific issues and politics: law and order; anti-immigration; anti-Islam. -Free-market economic orientation, retrenchment on public expenditure, economic individualism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Working class particularly, but also other social groups overrepresented. -Older cohorts overrepresented. -Men overrepresented. -Low education. -Negative attitudes toward immigration/immigrants. -Low social trust. -Authoritarian attitude(s): i.e. support for a strong leader; authoritarian childrearing; austere view of life. -Traditional religious behaviour. -Position on postmaterialist issues: low interest in environment/gender/minority rights. -Pro-market and pro-capitalist orientation on economic issues.
<i>Globalisation, marginalisation and the socio-economical bases of political resentment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reaction against globalisation and postindustrialization from specific social groups. - Scapegoating of other groups in society, in particular immigrants considered a threat on the labour market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identity politics: community/local/domestic vs. global/multicultural/international. -Welfare chauvinism. - Protectionist position vs. ultraliberal and pro-market capitalism. -Emphasis on risk, fear, threat and insecurity in the future. -Forms of anti-Americanism, non-interventionist foreign policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unemployed and people outside the labour market overrepresented. -Unskilled and skilled working class overrepresented. -Low education. -Welfare state chauvinism. -Low level of social trust. -Diffuse feelings of insecurity and fear for what the future will bring.
<i>Protest vote, anti-establishment populism and political distrust</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Will of people ‘supreme over every other standard’. -Protest vote and anti-establishment politics. - Political distrust. -Charismatic leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Idealization of community and belonging (“Us the people”). -Dichotomised political discourses and rhetoric, such as: Us vs. Them; the People vs. the political and intellectual elite, the productive society vs. the unproductive and parasite elite. -Ideological opportunism (neither left nor right), lack of clear ideological positioning; not a party. but a movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Broad social composition, but middle-class groups (particularly small entrepreneurs) overrepresented. -Low political trust and political efficacy. -No clear ideological positioning on left/right scale. No clear party identification. -Fear for own economic position/status.

tion on the basis of class and religion) has weakened the voters' attachment to the established parties in the three countries. This process was characterised by a political *dealignment*, which affected the established structure of the political space and which was followed by a *realignment* based on conflicts dealing increasingly with cultural and value issues.

Among the new issues integrated in the cultural and value dimension, which have become central in the past decade, are immigration, the process of European integration, environment and gender issues. According to this hypothesis and voluntarily amplifying its implications, one could argue that the three parties act increasingly in response to the new cleavage hypothesis. In this perspective, a restrictive position against immigration and in particular against Islam and the opposition to (further) European integration have become central issues shaping the politics and the electoral appeal of these parties and have perhaps diminished the saliency of other positions. A point in case is anti-immigration, which in recent years has developed into a position where particular attention has been given to the Western and Christian values and principles in opposition to Islam and its views.

I would also expect that the experience with government responsibility and political influence has largely influenced these parties' ideology, for example in relation to their protest and anti-establishment profile. It can be a difficult task for a party to combine protest and anti-establishment practices with the duties of a governing party. A political choice can therefore be to focus on other issues, for example emphasise cultural and identity questions in relation to Islam or highlight how the process of European integration threatens national sovereignty.

At the risk of forcing the reading, I suggest that the three hypotheses and their implications indicate a developmental path for the radical right parties, characterising somehow the different stages of the life of a party. Seen in this perspective, the protest and anti-establishment phase would be more 'functional' when the party is at the margins or at least outside government, but less effective when the party is 'in charge'. In the same way, the negative consequences of globalisation and marginalisation, for example in relation to the immigrant workers on the national labour market, can mobilise the electorate in periods of economic crises, but are electorally less appealing in times of economic growth and labour demand.

Of course the pattern suggested above does not consider aspects related to the political opportunity structure and to the single parties' specific conditions of development. But again, it wants to suggest a dynamic evolution rather than a static interpretation in the approach to the radical right. At least, it also introduces different examples to which the three cases can be compared in a more structured way. The different dimensions indicated by the hypotheses below can clarify how the parties have developed and whether this has brought them closer to each other or further apart.

2.3 New social and political cleavages and the post-materialist/libertarian vs. materialist/authoritarian thesis

During the last decade, immigration has gained increasing attention among voters. However, it is particularly among those who cast their vote for a radical right party that the interest is highest and the attitudes most negative. The increasing relevance of the issue on the parties' agenda supports the hypothesis that their emergence and development is also the result of a more general trend in the political development of many Western (post-)industrialised countries.

The social and economic processes of post-industrialisation and post-modernisation that interested most of the industrially advanced Western societies, have given rise to new social and political cleavages with a significant impact on the way the electorate votes and on the way parties are structured and positioned within the political space. It has in fact brought about a fundamental change in the traditional cleavage structure, which was created by two other historical revolutionary processes: the national revolution and the industrial revolution.

These traditional/modern cleavages were represented by the conflict between old and new forces that saw: 1) the rural/urban (centre/periphery) and the national state versus the church, which emerged from the national revolution; 2) the land versus urban/industrial interests and the owners versus the labourers, produced during the industrial revolution. These conflicts were later reduced to two main cleavage dimensions: a cultural (religious) and a socio-economic one (class) (cf. Kriesi et al. 2006). Since the 1920s these two cleavages have been embedded in a surprisingly stable party structure, well-described by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) in their 'freezing hypothesis'. The cleavages are believed to have remained almost unchallenged until at least the 1960s.

In a predominately materialistic world, conflict over income and ownership of the means of production was the central issue. However, the premises for a societal change started during the second post-war period as a result of the increasing welfare, rising levels of education, secularisation and value change in most Western societies, which reduced the importance of the traditional cleavages (Inglehart 1977). When the post-war generation reached adulthood, it started to promote post-materialist values. In the late 1960s, new groups of voters began to mobilise around new issues and politics. It was in this period that the attention of the electorate started to cluster around environmental problems, gender issues and ethnicity and minority rights. In particular, this development initiated the decline of traditional party identification based primarily on economic and material interests. The conventional view of class voting associated – roughly put – with working class support for the left-wing parties, because they sustained redistributive politics, more government intervention, social reforms and the feasibility of wage increases, started to lose centrality.

From the societal changes that started at the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s a more 'issue oriented' voter moved into politics, much less influenced by class interests and more by the position on issues that the individual considers important (see e.g. Lipset 1967; Bauman

1982; Clark and Lipset 1991). This process also meant that the voting preference of manual workers were no longer automatically associated to socialist/left-wing parties.

The new political challenge was represented by the development of a cultural/value dimension, which gained increasing relevance in the structuring of party systems, party competition, and voter alignment. This new dimension intersected with the traditional left-right dimension and gave rise to a two-dimensional political space, creating more complex combinations both in terms of party politics, party competition and voting behaviour (e.g. Borre 2001).

The two-dimensional political space is today widely used in political studies to place two sets of rival political positions: 1) an economically leftist (redistributive) versus an economically rightist (neo-liberal) pole representing the 'old' dimension and 2) a libertarian/post-materialist versus an authoritarian/materialist pole containing the 'new' value dimension (see particularly in Kitschelt 1995; Inglehart 1997; Inglehart and Rabier 1986).

It is worth mentioning in relation to the development of the new cleavage thesis that the transformations and restructuring of the political space was first of all described in terms of a left-wing 'driven' phenomenon and mainly for the initiative of social movements rather than for the receptiveness of the political parties of the left. Post-materialists first became visible as student protesters in the 1960s, with values that differed strongly from those of the establishment. The new issues mobilised in particular in the name of universalist values, giving emphasis to aspects such as human and ethnic minority rights, racial questions, gender equality, solidarity with the poor, protection of the environment etc. These issues gradually entered the political agenda of the left-wing, also because several of the socio-cultural professionals who had been active in the 'cultural revolution' of the 1960s and 1970s became actively involved in the left-wing parties (Inglehart 1997: 240; cf. also Kriesi 1998).

An evident effect of value change in advanced industrial societies was the emergence of new politics and new political parties. A clear result was the formation and breakthrough of the green parties in some Western European countries (e.g. Germany, Italy), which successfully attracted the post-materialist electorate with a political agenda based on the environment and its preservation (see Kitschelt 1989).

The mobilisation of these new social movements did not really add a new dimension, but rather contributed to transform and give a different meaning to the existing and crystallised into a new value(/cultural) dimension and an old economic dimension (on this cf. Kriesi 2008: 13).

Most noticeably, it was the meaning of the conflicts associated with the two dimensions that acquired more significance and effect. In particular, the reaction against the libertarian turn soon produced an important answer. For more than a decade, post-materialist values dominated the political agenda in most Western democracies, inspired by the new issues introduced during the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s, the right wing started a counterattack, often using 'the same political techniques that the postmaterialists had introduced during the 1960s, when they were a relatively powerless minority' (Inglehart 1997: 240).

This is what Pietro Ignazi (1992) once defined as the ‘silent counter-revolution’.¹² It was a reaction that did not make use of slogans, public demonstrations or appeals, but shaped the attitudes and values that we find today at the opposite pole of post-materialism. The reaction against the post-materialists’ political agenda is generally considered in terms of an appeal to more authoritarian values, which should stand out against what the right wing interprets as the excessive libertarianism and freedom introduced by the post-materialist values. This response has in the last 20 years or so become crucial to understand the restructuring of the political space in several national contexts.

Less clear in respect to political positioning is the authoritarian right’s standpoint on traditional economic policy. This is an interesting aspect that will be taken up later in connection with the ideology and politics developed by the three radical right parties considered here. Suffice it to say here that the literature on the radical right tends to ascribe to these parties a materialist (Inglehart 1997) and neo-liberal positioning (Kitschelt 1995).

The role played by the growing levels of affluence and individual well-being as decisive societal conditions supporting the rise of non-material needs has been criticised by some scholars (e.g. Inglehart and Flanagan 1987; Flanagan 1982). Current value change, particularly at the individual level, has instead been related to the profound transformation of the condition of human society, i.e. a reorganisation of the historically and socially determined norms and values, which came with the introduction and adjustment to new structural and technological conditions. *Post-industrialism* rather than *post-materialism* is in this case considered to have created basic changes in the general conditions of life by giving rise to a fundamental and enduring reorientation in social and political values and behaviour. This kind of development has been particularly evident in the advanced industrial societies, where the constraints imposed on individual self-realisation and expression at work and in the social realm at large have been significantly alleviated in comparison to the past. The passage from fordism to post-fordism, for example, brought a less commodified and more service-based paradigm of production in post-industrial societies, implying a need for better education, higher social and communicative skills and less authoritarian working environments, thus endorsing the general proliferation of libertarian attitudes.

The emergence of a new set of norms and values in the direction of less severe constraints and more open libertarian attitudes is observed particularly among the younger cohorts that have had the chance to grow up and socialise under the new conditions (see Flanagan 1982). At the individual level, however, value and political preference formation can also be influenced by different occupational and market experiences (see Kitschelt 1995). The most obvious differences being between: 1) wage earners and capital owners; 2) public and private sector employees and 3) domestic and international market oriented occupations. Blue collar workers in manufacturing, who are more exposed to the increasing competition on

¹² This definition refers to the opposite process of changing values and political styles in Western societies that Inglehart, already at the beginning of the 1970s, called ‘the silent revolution’ (Inglehart 1977).

the international market, are for instance considered more likely to have an authoritarian behaviour and view of life, particularly because their occupational situation is often associated with low education and a working environment characterised by repetitive object-processing tasks and low levels of social interaction. By contrast, high skilled white collar and professional occupations with high levels of education and engaged in symbol production and client interaction are expected to promote more libertarian attitudes.

Overall, citizens' orientation on libertarian and authoritarian alternatives may have been affected by several macro-developments: increasing affluence, education, changes in the sector and organisational composition of the labour market and the welfare state, socialisation.

Value change in post-industrial societies reflected not just a shift of saliency towards non-materialistic attitudes and behaviour, resulting from the diminishing marginal utility of material needs, but a fundamental transformation of value preferences from an authoritarian, austere and hierarchic oriented behaviour (and view of life) towards a libertarian attitude characterised by a secular, anti-authoritarian and more indulgent conception of the world.

The distinction between a post-materialist/materialist dimension and a libertarian/authoritarian one is essential to fully understand the value change that has taken place over the last decades. The most relevant transformation was perhaps the decline of authoritarianism, rather than the fading importance of economic concerns and material preferences. As observed by some scholars (Flanagan 1982; Kitschelt 1995), the importance ascribed to material issues can in fact still vary very much even among groups showing high levels of post-materialist values.

Material needs can be pushed up by economic crises and rising unemployment. At the individual level, the preference for economic issues can re-emerge during a particular period of life, or simply as a consequence of the competition for more income, reflecting considerations of personal satisfaction and status position, rather than the levels of access to consumer goods. What happens then in relation to the libertarian values? Should we expect a return to authoritarianism?

It is interesting to note that while several observers do agree that parties such as the Danish People's Party, the Austrian Freedom Party and the Northern League occupy a definite place within the authoritarian/ anti-libertarian pole in the two-dimensional policy space created by the new values, it is less clear where these parties position themselves in relation to the economic/materialist dimension (cf. Knutsen 1995).

Kitschelt's winning formula suggested a combination of capitalist pro-market orientation together with authoritarian appeals. But his interpretation has already been criticised (cf. Ivarsflaten 2005; Carter 2005) and partly reassessed by himself (cf. McGann and Kitschelt 2005). For sure, the different radical right patterns in the politics of economics suggest that the strategies and opportunities on this political dimension have given different results. This also reflects the different ways voters cluster together in relation to these dimensions, clearly affecting the politics of the parties in their vote maximisation efforts (Kitschelt 1995). These

considerations underline the need to: 1) consider how these parties have developed, changed and performed through time (perhaps developing different winning formulas) as regards both their ideology and electoral constituencies; 2) to adopt a comparative perspective in order to come to more general conclusions.¹³

The significance that the value dimension has acquired in relation to the ideology and politics of the radical right is interesting (see e.g. Rydgren 2005, Betz 2002; Kitschelt 1995; Kriesi et al. 2008). Particularly in the Scandinavian case and more specifically Denmark, the role played by the traditional class cleavage has diminished since the late 1960s, in line with the increasing importance gained by the new left/right value dimension (see Borre and Goul Andersen 1997; Borre 2003). Class voting, as measured by the Alford index,¹⁴ dropped from around 50 pct. in 1966 to circa 25 pct. in 1979, where it remained relatively stable until the 1990s, dropping dramatically again to 6 pct. in 2001 (cf. Borre and Goul Andersen 1997: 123-125).

The formation of new political parties also seems to endorse this development. The new party agendas showed that the electorate they addressed was not necessarily represented by traditional social groups, but by voters whose political choice was an expression of the transformations taking place in the social and political space. In contrast with some of the expectations postulated by the new cleavage theory, the post-materialist and libertarian issues (e.g. environment, gender, social justice) affected the voters' agenda until the 1970s, whereas the late 1980s, but particularly the 1990s, were characterised by an orientation towards more authoritarian positions on issues such as immigration, law and order and foreign aid to developing countries (cf. Borre 1999; Goul Andersen 1999).

In 2001, the new politics dimension turned out to be stronger than traditional class politics (Borre 2003). This changeover in Danish politics also emerged from the voters' political agenda, where immigration was mentioned among the most important issues for the government (Goul Andersen 2003).

Among scholars there is little doubt that this new political situation has strongly contributed to the electoral success of the Danish People's Party (see e.g. Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 2000; 2002; Goul Andersen 2004), also taking into account that until the 1990s, immigration was not really a priority on the political agenda of the established parties, except for short-term interest in this issue (Tonsgaard 1989).

Some fundamental questions arise in relation to the new cleavage hypothesis. To start with: do the three case studies represent a reaction against a society under rapid social and

¹³ This can be achieved by using a comparative perspective that, in Kitschelt's words: '(should not) boil down differences and similarities of extreme-rightist electorates to a few highlights without examining the competitive space in which the extreme right is situated and the political relations between mainline conservatives, social democrats, and left libertarians' (Kitschelt 1995: 48)

¹⁴ It is the most prominent 'objective' indicator for measuring class voting (see Alford 1962). It is calculated on the basis of the difference between the percentage of blue collar workers and white collar workers who vote for a left of centre party. In several advanced Western democracies the mean index value has diminished since the 1980s, in some cases becoming negative.

political transformation, as suggested in recent scholarly literature? Is the emergence of new social and political cleavages a (more) plausible explanation for their recent development? And more specifically, is the immigration grievance the issue that best explains why people vote for a radical right party?

However, it is also important to point out that the anti-immigration position is often presented as a sort of 'big box', which the radical right has filled with everything related to negative images and attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. As we will see in the empirical analysis of party ideology, the content of this 'box' developed differently, for example in terms of what kinds of problems have been emphasised over the years, how and when.

Besides, other new issues which can be related to the new cleavage deserve to be considered in relation to the radical right, among them family politics, gender roles, environmental issues and animal welfare. The fact that these may not have the same strong electoral appeal of anti-immigration does not mean that they do not play an important role for the image parties 'deliver' to the electorate.

In order to answer to the above-mentioned questions, the new cleavages hypothesis and its implications will be set against two other main competing explanations for the development of the radical right: the hypothesis considering the consequences of globalisation and the marginalisation process and the hypothesis arguing that the radical right parties can be better understood within a framework of protest, anti-elite feelings and political distrust.

2.4 Globalisation, marginalisation and the socioeconomic bases of political resentment

A significant part of the literature on the radical right focuses on the growing opposition between the two groups often labelled the 'winners' and 'losers' of globalisation. This approach puts clear emphasis on the societal consequences of the globalisation process, which has provoked the reaction of the so-called modernisation and globalisation losers, who are uncertain and afraid of the socioeconomic transformations in their social and working position (see e.g. Betz 1994).

Several dynamics are considered to be at play in relation to this response. The increasing flexibility of the labour market, together with post-industrialisation and the mobility of both capital and labour force can be mentioned as some of the reasons behind the concern about the near future in some segments of society. The feelings emerging from the uncertainty and risk are sometimes believed to prompt irrational responses and scapegoating practices, which are mainly driven by the need to find someone to blame for how things are going, particularly in respect to direct material concerns. In this case, the fear that immigrants represent a threat on the labour market because they bring down average wages is one of the main concerns related to the consequences of globalisation and immigration flows.

The end of the cold war in the late 1980s and the European Union enlargement in 2004 have perhaps exacerbated the fear of a new and cheap East European labour force that would enter the country and benefit from the new membership of the European Union. Welfare

chauvinism is therefore also considered a reaction related to the socioeconomic concerns of the immigration grievance and according to which immigrants are seen as undeserving and often exploiting recipients of national welfare schemes. High unemployment rates among immigrants (particularly among women) and their relatively recent presence in the country are mentioned among the reasons behind the idea that immigrants did not help build the welfare state, but only abuse it. This translates their entitlement to welfare benefits into a misuse of public money, which makes the future of those who 'have paid for it' uncertain.

Several scholars agree that the above-mentioned implications of the marginalisation hypothesis can play a role in the breakthrough and electoral support to the radical right. This theory is not completely new. In the second post-war period some theories suggested a similar social mechanism of 'revolt against modernity', interpreting the success of fascism in the light of a middleclass fear of downward economic and social mobility (Bell 1964). However, the marginalisation hypothesis emphasises the role of a residual class of socially disadvantaged (e.g. unemployed, low-skilled and semiskilled workers, retired) who are negatively affected both socially and economically by the course of events, having to face poorer opportunities on the labour market, increasing competition, reduced state benefits and increasing social inequality. This general condition would have encouraged the resentment of the most socially marginalised against immigrants, perceived as unwelcome competitors of welfare benefits (Betz 1994; Lubbers, Mérove, Peer 2002).

The appeal of several radical right-wing parties among the manual workers, for example the Danish People's Party and the Austrian Freedom Party (see e.g. Plasser-Ullrich 1999; Goul Andersen & Bjørklund 2000; Goul Andersen 2004), suggests another explanation in relation to the globalisation/marginalisation hypothesis, which tends to overlap with the new cleavage hypothesis. In this case, the relationship between authoritarian and libertarian attitudes and behaviour to social class is emphasised, rather than the economic consequences of globalisation. This kind of approach maintains that the working class support for the radical right has to be interpreted within the framework of decline of class consciousness. Workers supported the left wing mainly because these parties spoke for their economic (class) interests, while the working class did not really have the same libertarian and open approach towards for example minority (social and civic) rights, law and order, gender roles and sexuality and educational methods. With the decline of class politics, these issues gained ground in the decision of which party to vote for.

Contrary to widespread post-war social psychological theories (e.g. Eysenck 1954) and psychoanalytical studies on authoritarianism (Adorno et al. 1950), this behaviour was not so much related to upbringing during early childhood, but rather a consequence of lower educational standards, which, according to Lipset: '(...) predisposes [the working class] to view politics as black and white, good and evil' (Lipset 1960: 91).

Lower education is considered also to relate to characteristics of the individual, for example a lower engagement in political and voluntary organisations (see Putnam 1993), little

reading, isolated occupations, economic insecurity and authoritarian family patterns (Lipset 1960). These characteristics are often seen in opposition to those that should typify the 'globalisation winners', consisting of highly educated, highly skilled social groups and individuals, employed in fields where creative and social competences are required. Social groups with this profile often 'do well' in their private life and in their career and are less likely to vote for a radical right party. They do not fear internationalisation of labour, nor the social transformations this brings about; on the contrary, they feel advantaged by these conditions.

Since its formation in 1995, the Danish People's Party has achieved increasing electoral support, in particular among workers with lower education (cf. Stubager 2006). Whether this composition has more to do with problems of marginalisation among certain social groups, concerned by the transformations brought about by globalisation and post-industrialisation (see below) rather than with issue voting, is a hypothesis that has found little support so far in the studies on DF's electoral composition and attitudes (see e.g. Goul Andersen 2004). These studies emphasise that the most marginalised groups such as unemployed and early retirees are not overrepresented in the party electorate. However, it could be argued that it is the *fear* of marginalisation and future consequences of globalisation rather than an already marginalised status that encourage the vote for the Danish People's Party.

That would mean that those who think that their economic and social situation is under threat are still active in the labour market, but employed in occupational sectors that are strongly challenged by globalisation and post-industrialisation. Feelings of frustration and insecurity deriving from the work environment can be transferred to the broader social context, resulting in a search for security, self-confidence and belonging back into the norms, values and behaviour represented by the local community and the nation state.

As we will see, an explanation that puts weight on the *reaction* from the marginalised sectors of the so-called 'losers' of modernisation can to some extent overlap with some of the characteristics advanced by the hypothesis of the new cleavage dimension. In both cases, the social groups that are more likely to develop negative attitudes towards immigration and prone to develop authoritarian positions in relation to questions such as law and order and welfare rights, can be found among those who have less to gain from the transformations of advanced capitalist societies.

The marginalisation approach has different implications in relation to party ideology and electoral support. At the level of party ideology, for example, it is likely that the party official texts put an overall negative emphasis on whatever has to do with the development set off by the globalisation process. In this sense, it is more likely that the party is against uncontrolled forms of neo-liberalism and pro-market capitalism, supporting instead protectionist measures against the uncontrolled forces of the market.

The negative picture of globalisation can also trade into forms of 'light' anti-Americanism, portraying the United States as the worst scenario in terms of the effects of the globalisation process on society as a whole and on the labour market in particular. Recently, other

countries –for example China – might play the role of dangerous competitors on the international market for the survival of certain sectors of the national economy.

The opposition to globalisation also suggests a non-interventionist position on foreign politics, in particular when this implies getting involved in conflicts in other parts of the world. At the same time, the fear for the national social and economic situation can be expressed in forms of European scepticism. European integration is considered a danger to the national and a way to impose multiculturalism and globalisation on the member countries. In this sense, it is rather interesting to see the position of the three radical right parties on foreign policy and how it might have changed across time.

The macro-level implications of the marginalisation hypothesis suggest an electoral profile with an overrepresentation among the social classes at the margins of the labour market, who are afraid of further deterioration of their already insecure socioeconomic status. In this case, unemployed, people retired from the labour market, as well as unskilled blue collars represent, according to this reading, the broader voting pool for the radical right parties. This leaves many other questions unanswered; for instance, how do supporters of the three parties respond to authoritarian attitudes? Are they particularly worried about their socioeconomic situation and future life/career chances? Do they trust others? Is their vote particularly affected by considerations about the impact of immigration on the labour market and on the future of the welfare state? Do they support a different and unequal application of social and civic rights when it comes to immigrants and refugees?

The analysis of the electoral profiles of these parties attempts to answer to these questions. Although several studies have already dismissed the effects of the marginalisation hypothesis, considering them much less significant than other explanations, it still seems premature, particularly in the present period of global economic crisis, to maintain that they will not acquire more relevance in the very near future.

2.5 Protest vote, populism and political distrust

The resentment against the political establishment is often registered in the levels of political distrust that can be measured and observed in some Western democracies. In several cases, the protest translated into support for a party whose role and politics were perceived as alternative to mainstream politics.

The use of the vote as a means of political and populist protest is often considered an important feature behind the electoral support to the contemporary radical right (Betz 1994; 1994; Taggart 1996). This explanation raises a number of questions which have different implications (see Bergh 2004). For example, what are these voters protesting against and why? And which parties benefit from their protest and how?

These questions might sound obvious. Nevertheless, much of the academic literature that explains the rise of the radical right in terms of protest voting is not able to give clear-cut explanations. But before a more in-depth analysis of the protest hypothesis, it is important to

explain the relation between the protest by a part of civil society and the concept of populism. Populism is often considered a direct political outcome of the voters' reaction against the status quo.

In short, the term 'populism' is used both in relation to the popular bases of the protest, which in some cases finds its grassroots in a specific social layer, and to some specific ideological features that are believed to characterize the populist parties. However, despite the fact that the definition, the form and the content of populism have analysed several times in the past and more recently (cf. Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Canovan 1981; Taggart 2000; Meny-Surel 2002), the phenomenon has far from reached a clear classification. In particular, the hardest task is to operate empirically with the concept, because it either has been referred to specific historical cases (Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Shils 1956), or the definition of populism as an ideal type is too vague and descriptive to provide a clear frame of analysis (cf. Taggart 2000). As often underlined by scholars who have analysed the phenomenon, 'populism' is both elusive and recurrent (see Laclau 1977: 143; Canovan 1981). As it was observed in a classical study on populism:

there has been no self-conscious international populist movement which might have attempted to control or limit the term's reference, and as a result those who have used it have been able to attach to it a wide variety of meanings. The more flexible the word has become, the more tempted political scientists have been to label 'populist' any movement or outlook that does not fit in any established category (Canovan 1981:6)

As pointed out before, the vagueness of 'populism' is also the result of the fact that this definition, with all it implies, has been used to boil down characters related to: the nature, sociological background and political features of past and present populist movements, whose common denominator was constituted 'by the people' (see e.g. Taguieff 1995). An attempt to trace a map of populism that can later be employed on the analysis of the specific cases can then be that of considering separately: 1) the reasons and social basis of the populist protest and; 2) its ideological aspects.

The socio-economic conditions of an historical period are undoubtedly a relevant factor for the development of specific forms of populist movements. Considering the most recent cases of populist mobilisation in Western Europe, an explanation of the phenomenon puts emphasis on the middle class element of certain populist movements (e.g. Fryklund and Peterson 1981). In particular, the small individual entrepreneur most likely represents the bedrock support for the populist protest. Wider support from other social groups is then achieved by means of the broadly shared paradigm of the opposition between people and the rulers, i.e. between a productive and an unproductive, a 'nourishing' and a consuming class in society. However, what lies behind the reaction is what Fryklund and Peterson call 'a system revolt within the limits of the system' (Fryklund and Peterson 1981: 396), i.e. the result of the development of contrasting forces within the system between simple commodity production and

the pace of capitalist expansion through rapid industrialisation and modernisation. The reaction to this situation comes, in the first place, from the petite bourgeoisie mainly consisting of small entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, self-employed craftsmen and artisans who still rely on simple commodity production. These groups differ in many regards, but they share the risk of losing their social and economic position as a consequence of the rapid social changes, best epitomised by an ever-growing public sector and large-scale capitalist organisations; a threat that becomes particularly concrete in periods of economic recession. Earlier seminal accounts (see e.g. Lipset 1960) had already anticipated this relationship between the stage of economic and social development and the reaction from the middle-class as an explanation at the roots of support for fascism back to the interwar period.¹⁵

The reaction is based on the fear of losing not only economic power, but also social status (Lipset 1960: 307-371). The threat of losing status is considered to affect those who have risen in the economic structure and may be frustrated in their desire to be accepted socially by those groups who already hold status, by the feeling that the rapid social and economic changes threaten their own claims. It is interesting how this state is considered to give rise to anxieties and frustrations, which can find their vent against common scapegoats represented by ethnic minorities or religious groups.

If there was an historical continuity with the past also in the social basis of contemporary politics, it would be possible to observe an overrepresentation of the petit bourgeoisie among contemporary radical right voters which, according to what has been said, would vote for a radical right party mainly out of fear of having something to lose, for example in relation to their economy or status within society. In this case, the characteristics would be consistent with the hypothesis of marginalisation drawn above.

The explanation of the social basis for the populist protest in Western Europe today refers to some extent to a similar set of interpretative frameworks. However, it is particularly in relation to the populist wave of the 1970s and 1980s that the *middle-class reaction* hypothesis is used. It is for example applied to the electoral breakthrough of the Scandinavian protest parties during the 1970s, where support from the middle class was essential to the success of the Danish Progress Party (e.g. Fryklund and Peterson 1981; Rasmussen 1977, Glans 1984). In the case of the Northern League in Italy, several analyses have also emphasised the overrepresentation of small entrepreneurs and self-employed in the surprising electoral success achieved by the party, particularly in its early years. This is explained by the fact that the electoral constituencies granting the Northern League most of its electoral success were located in the affluent Northern regions, characterised by an economy based on small family businesses (see e.g. Diamanti 1996: 19-27; see also Stella 1996).

¹⁵ Similar accounts, more broadly based on a conflicting tension between the traditional and the modern, the pre-industrial/agrarian and urban/industrial, often lie at the core of the literature on populist movements from different historical periods (for a critic of this paradigm see Laclau 1977).

As noted, recent interpretations tend to explain the concept of populism in terms of a more diffuse form of protest against representative democracy and its institutions. As we will see, in comparison with the middle-class reaction hypothesis this kind of approach is much less specific concerning the social basis of the protest. Some scholars (see e.g. Kitschelt 1995 and Kitschelt 2002) consider the middle class white-collars (primarily working in the private sector) more likely to support populist anti-statist political sentiments, as only more educated and consequently politically more sophisticated voters can advance a critique against the political establishment and the way it operates. But in most of cases, the socioeconomic composition of the electorate is believed to appeal to a broader social coalition, where perhaps those showing a low level of *political trust* in the system and the establishment together with a low *political efficacy* are overrepresented in the voter composition. In classical political theory (Easton 1965), political efficacy refers to people's perception of their ability to influence the political system, while political trust indicates people's perception of the necessity/ability to influence the political system at various levels. However, one might argue that a problem with much of the analyses on populist protest parties is the relatively simplified explanation of their electoral support. Claiming that the party's success is mainly a result of the voters' protest downgrades it (in particular concerning the party ideology) to a level where the protest is the party only, or at least main, relevant ideological characteristic. There is also another problem related to the life cycle of these parties: can a protest party continue to be considered as such when it achieves political influence and government responsibility? And do its voters continue to perceive its anti-establishment role in the same way?

However, it is important to observe that type and objectives of the protest can stem from very different reasons (Bergh 2004). In the most radical case, protest can mean a direct threat to democracy (Sartori 1976; see also Capoccia 2002 for a reassessment of the anti-systemic concept), but in its softer version it is interpreted as a general distrust expressed by some voters in the way representative democracy and its institutions work and in the influence they have on the system.

In Italy, for example, the electorate has since the 1970s been very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in the country (Pasquino 2002). Already at the beginning of the 1960s, the classical comparative study *Civic Culture* by Almond and Verba (1963; 1965), portrayed the 'average' Italian as a citizen with very little interest in politics, and much more proud of the culture, art and architectonic beauties of the country than of the condition of democracy and of the political system. Another scholar defined the Italian political culture by means of three negative expressions: fragmentation, alienation and isolation (La Palombara 1987). Much of the literature on this subject agrees that the roots of this behaviour/attitude have their origin in the socio-political and economic history of the country before and after its unification in 1860 (see e.g. Putnam 1993).

Another form of protest can be provoked by specific social and political transformations that for instance weakened the dominance of the established parties, contributing to increased dis-

satisfaction among voters with the inability of the political parties to put problems on the agenda and discuss solutions. This is believed to happen in particular when the programs and agendas of the established parties are very similar to each other, since they all tend to cluster towards the middle, following a vote-maximising strategy (Taggart 1996; Kitschelt 1995). In this case, it might be argued, the protest is mainly a critical reaction against how mainstream parties relate to specific issues, more than a protest against the elite *per se*. The demand for stricter rules against immigration can help explain why a voter decides to support a party.

What at first sight may be read as a vote of protest is rather to be considered a reaction resulting from a policy preference. According to some scholars (see Van der Brug et al. 2000; Van der Brug and Fennema 2003), anti-immigration parties attract no more protest votes than other mainstream parties do. The vote for these parties is not less ideological and pragmatically driven than the vote for other parties. The difference is that the negative attitude towards immigrants has a stronger effect for motivating support to an anti-immigration party. An example in this direction is the vote for the Danish People's Party (see e.g. Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 2000; 2003; Goul Andersen 2004), whose electoral support seems to be much more issue-oriented than driven by specific anti-establishment and anti-elite feelings.

Another kind of protest vote is directly against the political and intellectual elite and against a country's institutions and can be caused by a country-specific historical and sociopolitical development (Betz 1994; Kitschelt 1995).

The electoral success of the ethno-regionalist and populist Northern League during the 1990s cannot be explained without reference to the political situation in Italy at the beginning of the 1990s (Biorcio 2003; Diamanti 1996). These years witnessed the passage from what in Italy is considered the system and history of the First Republic to the current Second Republic. The events of the 1990s provoked a political earthquake that involved most of the political system and in which several prominent parties and politicians were accused of serious bribes and corruption. This situation gave new political actors the chance to exploit the possibilities in the growing anti-establishment populist protest.

A similar type of protest is believed to have affected the Austrian case (see again Kitschelt 1995). Thirteen years of the so-called Great Coalition between the Austrian Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) and the Conservatives (ÖVP), together with the colonization of the public sector and publicly owned companies by means of the *Proporz* system are believed to have provoked the voters, who expressed their protest by voting for the FPÖ (see e.g. Plasser and Ulram 2000). As in the case of LN, the party was considered extraneous to the clientelist politics and patronage practices that the political establishment had constructed over a decade. The FPÖ also insisted very much on its role of guarantor to the Austrian pluralist democracy, attacking on several occasions the duopoly system built by the SPÖ and ÖVP.

On the whole it seems that anti-establishment populism and ideology were more successful in Italy and Austria (Kitschelt 1995; 2002; Biorcio 2003; Betz 1994), increasing the electoral support of the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party. However, there is reason to

believe that the mobilisation strength of anti-establishment populism in the case of the LN and FPÖ has lost some of its relevance, particularly since the two parties reached political responsibility and duties in government, making it more difficult for them to distinguish themselves from the other mainstream parties.

At any rate, there is still very little conceptual clarity behind the use of the term ‘protest vote’, making it difficult to test this interpretation empirically. The different forms of protest outlined above represent an attempt to interpret protest voting in terms of the possible underlying reactions and electoral choices. Two can be considered proper ‘protest votes’, where the vote primarily represents discontent with the system and anti-establishment/elitist feelings, whereas one is rather the result of what we have defined a ‘policy-driven’ protest, where the vote mainly expresses dissatisfaction with the issue positions of the mainstream parties (Miller 1974).

In the literature on populism, the ideology, programmes, rhetoric, discourses and organisation of the parties are often considered important for their success. However, it is difficult to find out what ideological contents are considered important and whether they change in relation to the different positions the party occupies in the political space.

Contemporary studies tend to combine different aspects of this phenomenon, and there is an overlap among the reasons that have provoked the protest (demand side) and the ideological features that characterise the parties (supply side). This often gives a picture of these parties as merely manifestations/results of the transformations and contradictions that are at the basis of the protest, forgetting about the role of the party as competitive actor on the political scene. In his attempt to draw out an ideal-type of the concept of populism, Taggart makes an explicit list of the most important features for understanding populism at the political level (Taggart 2000; 2002). One is the politics of identity, in which people identify with their ‘heartland’, an ideal conception of one’s community where all core values come from. The sovereignty of people over elites is best epitomized by the appeal to ‘direct democracy’, concretely translated into a demand for popular initiatives and referenda as the best form of government vs. the government represented by politicians, bureaucrats or judges.

Another important aspect is the lack of a clear political programme and ideology, which is related to the fact that the populist parties’ main goal is responding to peoples’ reaction to a sense of crisis. The refusal of any ideological self-positioning seems in this case well described by the expression ‘neither left, nor right, but for the people’, which populist parties often like to make use of.

2.6 Research design, method and data

The implications of the three working approaches described above will be considered on the two levels that characterise the present study, namely: party ideology and party electorate. This will be done by considering the three main interpretations to the radical right breakthrough and development in relation to three concrete case studies: the Danish People’s Party

(*Dansk Folkeparti*, DF), the Northern League (*Lega Nord*, LN) and the Austrian Freedom Party (*Freiheitlichen Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ). Particular attention will be given to the analysis of the Danish People's Party. This for two reasons: for the first, because the Danish People's Party is -among the three- the party which has 'done best' in terms of electoral support and political influence even if it is the youngest of the three (the party was founded in 1995). For the second, because compared to the older and much more known FPÖ and LN, the DF is still a relatively little studied party, particularly outside Denmark.

The three approaches introduced above will mainly be used to: 1) improve the structuring of the comparative analysis by suggesting some clear dimensions to the analysis of respectively party ideology and electoral profile and attitudes; 2) indicate some possible paths of development, which allow us to consider these parties as dynamic actors, rather than fixed realities occupying a specific space in the political landscape.

In this respect, one of the challenging tasks of this study is to account for the ideological and electoral development and transformations undergone by these parties. Until recently, the studies on the radical right have focussed almost exclusively on the parties' breakthrough and electoral success. Time is now ripe to direct the research towards the development and political impact of the radical right parties, both at the national level (considering how these parties have tackled becoming mainstream) and at the international level, looking comparatively at the ideological and electoral convergences and differences that have characterised the different phases of their evolution. In this respect, it can be argued that only the long time span lets us cast light on the question of whether the radical right parties in Western Europe have developed more similar agendas and in respect to what dimensions and issues. This does not mean that studying the radical right electoral breakthrough has become irrelevant. On the contrary, considering the conditions that may have facilitated the rise of the radical right parties in some countries can help understanding the following steps of their more recent development and their possible impact on the political system.

In the last decade, the radical right has enhanced its influence significantly, not only on the political debate in general, but also at the level of policy making. As national governments attempt to cope with new realities of global migration patterns, strained welfare states, the threat of foreign terror to national security and the challenges of the recent global economic crisis, new opportunities opened up for parties of the radical right to position themselves strategically. This means that while the theoretical framework created by the three hypotheses can help cast light on the conditions of emergence of the DF, LN and FPÖ and their similarities and differences, other frameworks might be considered to explain the recent phase. In particular, the influence of the political opportunity structure can play a decisive role for the history, development and successful performance of a party. The implications and effects of this will be considered in relation to each party.

2.7 Selection of the qualitative and quantitative material

The analysis of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party is based on a selection of both qualitative and quantitative material. The literature used for the qualitative analysis consists primarily of official party programmes, manifestoes, newsletters and newspaper articles with interviews to some of the parties' prominent leaders. The intent is, however, to look primarily at the official ideological and programmatic position of a party by taking into account a broad spectrum of publications. This means looking at the position and profile that the party wants to present to its potential electorate and core voters.

Of course it can be argued that most voters do not read party programmes. Their idea of a party and its political positioning is often influenced by other channels of communication, such as television and newspapers. This is also why the qualitative material collected for this study is not exclusively based on official party programmes, but – where possible – also uses other party documents such as newsletters, articles from party papers and to some extent slogans, mottos and images used in party campaigns and elections. Parties send their 'message' out to voters using different communication strategies; the publication of the party programme is one strategy, but not necessarily the most effective, when it comes to reaching and influencing the electorate. However, while the way and channels used to communicate the message can be different, especially in societies where communication is so important, the substance of the message is the same, since a party would hardly insist on something it does not stand for.

Party programmes are also one of the best sources of party positioning and saliency of issues and in a temporal perspective a good indicator of a party's transformations. As will be discussed more specifically in later chapters, one of the difficulties of using party programmes and documents is that tracking the development and transformation of politics and ideology requires extensive reading. This task is even more demanding when three parties are involved. Considering that there are very few examples, the method suggested in this study represents a possible approach to this kind of literature to look at the way the parties have moved from marginalisation to the centre of the political system.

The analysis of the electoral profile and attitudes is based on quantitative data. For the Danish People's Party and the Italian Northern League the research is primarily based on data from the Danish national electoral studies and from the Italian National Election Studies (ITANES). The Danish election survey project started already in 1973 and has since covered every parliamentary election, giving the opportunity to see how the voters' agenda, attitudes and composition have changed over time.¹⁶ The data considered in this study start from the 1994 election – when the Danish People's Party still did not exist, but whose founders were already politically active in the Progress Party – and end by including also the last election survey data from 2007.

¹⁶ See the homepage of the Danish Electoral Studies at <http://www.socsci.auc.dk/election/dansk/index.htm> (last accessed 11-11-2008).

The Italian National election studies (ITANES) have a more recent history.¹⁷ The Italian project was launched at the beginning of the 1990s, starting with two post-electoral surveys in connection with the parliamentary elections. However, the first real major survey is from 1994 post-electoral data. The 1994 electoral survey still almost exclusively covered party behaviour and positioning, whereas variables on attitudes towards immigration and immigrants, nationalism, social trust and the like were included from 2001. The data considered include the surveys from 1994 to 2008, covering the last five Italian parliamentary elections (1994, 1996, 2001, 2006 and the recent 2008). The Italian data represent an advantageous starting point to look at the transformations of the electoral composition and attitudes of the Northern League. The party appears very little in international surveys (very small N), which can be explained in different ways, for example: the party's political and geographical specificity, the decline in electoral support to the party in the late 1990s and beginning of 2000¹⁸ and a certain reticence by party supporters to declare that they voted LN.

The Italian election studies tell us more about the Northern League's voters, even if the number of party cases is sometimes low (more specifically in relation to the two elections in 2001 and 2006). The shortcomings in the first-hand data will therefore, when necessary, be counterbalanced by second-hand literature dealing more specifically with the Northern League's voter composition and attitudes.

A little more complex was the case of the Austrian Freedom Party, given that Austrian electoral surveys are not available to the international community. The analysis of the FPÖ electorate has thus been conducted based on different international surveys, including the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) on national identity (1995), the 1999 European Value Survey and the European Social Survey (first round 2002-03).

The ISSP is a cross-national social survey which started at the beginning of the 1980s and each year covers a different topic with particular significance for research in social and political science. The ISSP survey considered here is on national identity and the first Austria joined as a member partner.¹⁹

The European Value Study (EVS) is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research programme on basic human values. The survey explores the moral and social values underlying European social and political institutions and governing conduct. The first major survey was carried out in 1981 in ten European countries. Austria took in the second wave of surveys which was launched in 1990 and included all European countries (and many

¹⁷ For a more detailed description of the ITANES programme see in Italian: <http://www.itanes.org/index.asp>, or in English at <http://www.italianpoliticalscience.org/issue1/itanes-the-italian-national-election-study-series> (last accessed 11-11-2008).

¹⁸ Remember that the party electoral results have always been very different at the regional level. At the most recent elections of 2008 the party got 8.2 pct. of the votes at the national level, reaching the peak of 26.7 pct. of the votes in the Veneto region and 20.7 pct. in Lombardy (see Table 1.4; Chapter 1).

¹⁹ For more details and archive of previous and following data see in: <http://www.issp.org/data.shtml> (last accessed 11-11-2008).

non-European). The data here refer to the 1999/2000 wave, as the last and more recent wave of EVS is not yet available.

The ESS is a European-based and academically-driven social survey designed to track and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of its diverse populations. The first round was completed between 2002 and 2003 and focussed on citizenship and immigration.²⁰ Austria, Denmark and Italy were all represented. In the ESS, the number of cases representing the Austrian Freedom Party is relatively low, as in those years the party was just facing a critical period in terms of electoral support.²¹ However, the second-hand literature based on the Austrian electoral surveys will also help to understand the party electoral profile and attitudes.

It is perhaps uncommon to use so many different surveys in an analysis of the radical right. Particularly international surveys generally prefer to concentrate on one survey at time. This allows full use of the same variables in a cross-national and comparative perspective, but at the same time gives only a 'snap-shot' of the party at a particular period in time, which loosing therefore most of the information about how the party has developed and changed at the different stages of its political life.

The period considered by the study in relation to the three parties focuses in particular on the years going from the late 1980s and 1990s and until the recent developments. For extra clarity, it is perhaps necessary to say that the temporal scale is open at both ends, particularly in respect to the qualitative material considered, whereas it is more precisely limited in relation to the quantitative data. However, the lifespan considered allows us to look at different phases of development of the three parties in terms of ideology, electoral support, government-seeking strategies and political influence.

²⁰ Each European Social Survey round has a questionnaire consisting of a permanent module, which is repeated at every round, and two or more rotating modules, designed by multi-national teams of experts and whose thematic focus varies at every round. The two modules carried out in the first round dealt with: 1) citizens, involvement and democracy and 2) immigration. See <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>.

²¹ Unfortunately it is even worse for the Danish People's Party and the Northern League; this last represented by only 11 cases in the 2002 ESS.

3. PARTY IDEOLOGY IN A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Considering the extensive literature on the rise of radical right parties that has been published since the mid 1980s, it is remarkable how little attention has been given to radical right-wing party ideology. In light of the assertions emphasising the increasing ideological similarities among radical right parties in Western Europe, comparative analyses of party ideology can uncover several aspects about the similarities and differences developed by these parties.

An explanation for this lack of interest can be ascribed to the theoretical approach that since the 1980s has won a leading position in studies of these parties and which favours descriptive and cause and effect approaches. The electoral breakthrough and development of radical right wing parties have most commonly been related to structuralist readings. This has often entailed that long-term ‘bottom up’ interpretations have represented a pivotal paradigm to explain the vote for the radical right in Western Europe. More specifically, the growing political and social discontent – or frustration – among voters who have been less favoured and are more sceptical about the transformations in advanced capitalist countries, are considered among the main explanations of the radical right wing and populist vote.

As outlined in Chapter 1, many studies on radical right wing parties highlight the consequences of the weakened class cleavage in party politics, which has declined over the last three decades in many Western post-industrial societies. This has given rise to a process of partisan dealignment, where traditional patterns of voter-party loyalties related to class interests have declined. And in a time of less predictable voting behaviour, where the rock-like configuration of class and partisan identities no longer anchors voters to specific parties, other ‘doors’ have opened up for party competition. But this also means that parties are given the opportunity to capitalise the vote by investing in specific politics or issues, which can take advantage of the long-term and enduring structural transformations of societies (new cleavages), as well as other short-term and country-specific settings and opportunities.

In short, mass parties, which emerged in the era of industrialisation, urbanisation and broader suffrage and brought people of common interest together based on a shared ideology, have slowly been replaced by parties promoting themselves on the rules of demand and supply driving the electoral market. Some studies (cf. for instance Kirchheimer 1966; Katz and Mair 1994) emphasise some of the extreme results of this process, indicating that party competition today is very similar to the marketing and ‘branding’ of a product, where the rule of thumb is to win the competition over marketable issues.

Party competition is thus increasingly based on a struggle for the ‘ownership’ of a number of salient questions. The task of a political party is to construct a party platform that provides voters with decision criteria and allows them to distinguish these from competing options when they have to vote. It follows that political parties focus increasingly on influencing the content of the political agenda, rather than positioning themselves on a limited number of issues responding to the socioeconomic profile of their electoral basis. This dynamic has in-

fluenced the content/framework of party ideology and the way parties place themselves in relation to each other in the political space.

3.2 The radical right's lack of ideology

Within the interpretative framework described above, party positioning on specific issues, for example immigration, law and order, foreign policy and welfare, are given increasing importance on party agendas. To some extent, this also explains why several scholars still consider radical right parties more as 'containers' of single-issues, rather than parties with a defined *Weltanschauung*. This is partly confirmed by the frequent use of classifications such as 'anti-immigration', or 'protest/populist' parties, which proliferated during the 1990s and clearly ascribed the electoral success of the radical right to the overwhelming 'popularity' of a specific and selected number of issues (see for example Van der Brug et al. 2000; Van der Brug & Fennema 2003). Undoubtedly, one of the most distinct features of the radical right wing parties – particularly in recent years – has been the strong opposition to immigration. This is also one of the reasons why 'anti-immigration' today has overshadowed the protest and populist component, which until the 1990s was among the main interpretations of the vote to the radical right.

One of the intentions of this chapter is to show that radical right wing ideology is more complex and broad than most scholars and analysts have been inclined to concede. There is also reason to expect that the legitimisation of a number of radical right parties as partners or supporters of government coalitions (a condition which applies to the three parties considered here) has influenced the parties' ideology in two directions: 1) constraining the way the radical right in government incites anti-immigrant sentiments and 2) inducing these parties to elaborate more comprehensive programmes and political agendas.

In the literature on radical right wing parties, many scholars are cautious to use the word 'ideology' when speaking about these parties. It is as if scholars think that the parties lack a defined ideology, because they prefer opportunistically to follow the electoral disposition of the moment (e.g. protest/anti-establishment feelings), or because they rely almost exclusively on single issues (anti-immigration). For sure, several radical right parties' agendas neglect to take clear standpoints on some issues, for example socioeconomic policy and environmental questions. Paradoxical shifts between contrasting positions on certain issues can therefore occur, without the party feeling the urgency to explain or justify the changes to the electorate.

However, the political incoherence and ideological unfeasibility that have often been ascribed to the radical right are likely to characterise the initial phases of a party history. Particularly for a newly formed party, it can be more advantageous to concentrate on more appealing and vote winning issues. However, this strategy is unlikely to last forever. Electoral support for a political party whose ideological platform relies on a single issue, cannot survive in the long run, even if the issue has been the most important catalyst for the party's electoral breakthrough. Voters continue to support a party only if it demonstrates effectiveness and

reliability and if it is associated with issues where it is perceived as competent. The danger is to lose electoral support and die out, particularly in cases where protest and floating voters represented the main electoral recipient for a party's electoral breakthrough. This hypothesis is supported by some studies (see for example Van der Brug & Fennema 2003), which indicate that most of the radical right voters explain their vote with the same variables that determine preferences for mainstream parties. Votes for these parties are not necessarily protest votes, particularly in the long run.

In line with the role and political influence of a radical right party, there is reason to expect a diversification and development of its politics. But does this mean that the political strategy is to pick up new issues that might attract and gratify voters? In relation to this form of party behaviour in times of fast socioeconomic transformations, some scholars speak about *transaction party politics* (see Klages 2003; 2002). Free from the political constraints and ideological legacies characterising mainstream parties, the radical right can invest in issues which are particularly appealing to the electorate and which the other parties do not give enough space to. To attract voters from the whole political spectrum, transaction parties especially use symbolic political issues, whose content is deliberately made simplistic and accessible to everybody. Voters then feel directly engaged in the making of the party agenda and are therefore more likely to vote for the party. But again, how long can this political strategy last? And what happens when a party achieves government responsibility?

The transaction party thesis has a weak point: the need for a party to take in new issues to attract new voters or maximise existing electoral support is considered a permanent condition rather than a transitional stage leading to a new stable political and ideological position.

This interpretation can partly be ascribed to a reading which has become rather widespread in the literature on political parties and which is related to the observation that mainstream parties tend to move towards the political middle to attract more voters. This means that mainstream parties are less likely to make sudden changes in their party platform, or to take radical positions which could imply a loss of voters. The same definition 'mainstream parties' (but even more 'catch-all parties', nowadays frequently in use) indicates the effort to appeal to as many voters as possible. On the other side, the so-called peripheral parties tend to operate on the fringes of the political spectrum and their main characteristic is to be ideologically more volatile than mainstream parties.²² This is because these parties are able to direct their attention to a single or a limited number of issues, making them the focal point of their objectives and eventually adopting new issues and positions when the electoral appeal of the former is fading. In this sense peripheral parties can be considered the antithesis of main-

²² In the spatial theory of party competition (for example also in Kitschelt 1995), political parties compete for votes by strategically altering their policy position and/or choice situations (influenced also by political opportunity structures). This happens, for example, by adopting winning policy positions on certain issues and/or by promoting the importance of their winning issues over others. This approach can be seen at the opposite pole of the interpretation which emphasizes the role of the political elite, in giving shape and content to the public response to political events. The reality is rather somewhere in between these two opposite readings (on this point cf. Ivarsson 2008).

stream parties in terms of focus, tactics and objectives. Radical right parties are often considered as peripheral parties (see also Williams 2006), mainly because they are positioned at the margins of the political landscape (even if some of them have managed to 'leave the ghetto' and achieved political influence). However, the peripheral position of a radical right party should not be confused with permanent lack of political coherence and influence. A banal observation of how this happens is that a party's strategies and chances to be heard nowadays are more and much less traditional than in the past. As a matter of fact, most of the radical right parties in Western Europe very early developed well-designed and wide-ranging home-pages compared to other mainstream parties, which have come later in the process.

The opportunity to persuade and influence the public opinion on issues where the mainstream parties have shown a certain disinterest is thus not (or at least not only) necessarily the result of an opportunistic strategy. The development and restructuring of Western European societies have undoubtedly created new potential interests and demands that can be translated by the political elite into an ideological framework, which is able to mobilise voters and re-structure party politics. And again, this does not happen only because of bottom-up dynamics. As pointed out by Goul Andersen: 'this perspective is pretty different from the bottom-up approach (...) Focusing on political actors and on, *what conflicts are about*, allows to link the macro-, and meso- with the microlevel' (Goul Andersen 2007: 21).

The meso-level is about how the parties, through the agency of the political elite, are able to articulate the conflicts emerging at the socio-structural level into concrete and electorally successful ideological frameworks.

Seen within a broader perspective, this situation has encouraged the party to articulate and support clear political positions, which have also influenced the other parties. Bale (2003) suggests that the legitimisation of the radical right in several Western European countries and its policy impact has in fact strongly influenced the established parties. According to his analysis, this can be seen in the way traditional centre-right wing parties (mostly liberals and conservatives) – particularly on immigration policy and law and order – have started to inhabit and promote parts of the same discursive and rhetoric universe, which before was almost exclusively the domain of the radical right agenda.

The shrinking of the political distance between parties of the centre-right and the radical right is a consequence of the fact that several of the issues raised by the radical right had a considerable appeal among voters, most notably on problems related to immigration, crime and welfare abuse. The radical right agenda became more likely to win voters and therefore more attractive also among mainstream parties of the right. This has helped remove the constraints preventing a majority right wing coalition in parliament. Radical right and populist

votes were either going to the left (in the case of blue-collar voters), or were considered as wasted (in the sense that they did not benefit the office-seeking parties of the right).²³

The three parties observed in this study are an example of the legitimisation process which took place at the end of the 1990s, enabling the formation of governing coalitions including the radical right; something considered an almost impossible scenario only a decade before. This has made a number of new research questions highly relevant in relation to the radical right wing parties. But it has also urged a look at the impact of the radical right politics on the other parties. Has radical right support had any impact on the decisions and reforms made by the government, in particular on core issues represented by immigration policies? And have government responsibility and political influence affected the radical right parties and their ideology?

This chapter is going to look closer at how ideology can be tackled, first of all in comparative terms. Looking at the parties' recent electoral results, the success is clearly varied. Political strategy and ideology cannot explain the success or failure of a party as such.²⁴ The aim here is rather to look at the development of ideology of the party through the different phases of its life-time by considering a number of main ideological dimensions.²⁵

3.3 Party ideology: conceptual and methodological reflections

It is not easy to give a simple and exhaustive answer to what party ideology is. The word 'ideology' has no generally accepted definition and it has often been 'loaded' with different meanings, depending on the subject analysed and the approach adopted for the analysis (see for example Eatwell 1999). Furthermore, the importance of studying the ideology of political parties has at times been challenged by positions maintaining that the time of ideologies has come to an end or that any form of meta-narration was deemed to be past and finished. The lack of comparative research into the ideologies of political parties can perhaps be explained as a result of this position (see also Mudde 2000). However, parties still refer to fundamental principles and positions in their programmes and this is what allows them to distinguish themselves from the others and to compete in the political system.

²³ Although it can be argued that most of the radical right wing party leadership declares that the party is willing to support both centre-right wing and centre-left wing parties and coalitions, provided that these can realize as much as the radical right party politics as possible. To be sure, radical right parties reject the traditional classification between Left and Right. Jean-Marie Le Pen said that the French Front Nationale is 'neither to the Right, nor to the Left' (*ni droite ni gauche*). This position has the clear advantage of appealing to those voters, which Mayer (2002: 41-57) defines as the '*ninistes*'.

²⁴ Since the mid-1980s, a plethora of articles and studies have dealt with radical right electoral success, showing how difficult it is to make conclusive and univocal explanations for the rise and success of the radical right parties in Western Europe. Significantly, some recent analyses have begun to look instead at the reasons of the failure of the radical right (see for example Ivarsflaten 2006). The approach in this chapter is to look at the experience of the radical right by means of an analysis of party ideology taking into account how three different radical right parties developed their ideology when they achieved political influence. This approach can help explain why some parties have been electorally more successful than others, but electoral success is not the dependent variable to be explained.

²⁵ The position supported by this chapter is that a change of party politics (but also permanence) can be identified in party programmes and in the official literature of a party.

Martin Seliger's early classical work, *Ideology and Politics* suggests some approaches that are still helpful to study party ideology and to understand how it develops and changes in relation to the different positions that a party occupies in the political system. Seliger distinguishes between an inclusive and a restrictive conception of party ideology. In his words:

What defines the inclusive use of 'ideology' in the context of social and political theory and science is that it covers sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organised social action, and specifically political action, irrespectively of whether such actions aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given order.

In the restrictive use of the term, 'ideology' is reserved for extremist belief systems and parties; or ideological factors are held to be present in some and absent from other belief systems; or at least they are assumed to be more important in some than in others (Seliger 1976: 14).

For sure, it is the inclusive conception of ideology that best describes the meaning of party ideology in the present study. As also other scholars have observed, the risk in the restricted use of the term 'ideology' is to limit both the view of the phenomenon and its usage in comparative research; what in fact can be perceived as extremist and ideological in one context, can be moderate and non-ideological in another (see also Mudde 2000).

More specifically, this chapter focuses on an analysis of the 'conceptual frame of reference' built by the parties and providing the criteria of choice and decision, by virtue of which the major activities of the party are oriented and governed (Seliger 1976). A rather comprehensive indication of a party's fundamental ideas and directions on the nature of society and how it should be organised and governed can be found in the party programmes and official literature; this kind of material is moreover rather useful to show how the ideology of a party has developed and changed over time.

Some scholars (see e.g. Fennema and Pollman 1998) argue that party ideology does not only consist of the set of moral principles and political axioms primarily found in party programmes and party literature. These represent the 'ingredients' of party ideology, which answer the more immediate principles and positions of the electorate, whereas it is a party's political doctrine that creates the clear logical relationship among the key ideological concepts. Behind the political doctrine of a party is often the work of one or more intellectuals, whose intellectual activity and writings are considered crucial for the ideas and positions developed by the party.

There is no reason to doubt that specific political theorists may have exerted a relevant influence in forming the policies of a party (think for example about the influence that the Nouvelle Droite has had on the Front National in France), but this 'ideological debt' is not always openly recognised by the party members. Moreover, it can be difficult to determine to what extent, when, and in some cases for how long the political doctrine has influenced the ideology of a party.²⁶ Therefore, this chapter on (comparative) party ideology will mainly

²⁶ Some conclusions on party ideology made on the basis of interviews with party members a decade ago would give rather different results if repeated today (see Fennema and Pollman 1998). A case in point is the Italian party

focus on party literature, whereas the reference to a specific doctrine or thought is limited to cases where the party explicitly refers to the work or set of guidelines, which can clearly be attributed to the intellectual work of a single person or a 'school of thought'.

Highlighting the role of the political elite in the definition of ideological frameworks poses the question about how stable these frameworks are, particularly when confronted with changes in a party's placement within the political system. For instance, what happens to the ideology of a radical right party when the party's political platform is considered in relation to a lifespan model?²⁷

The main implication of a lifespan model is evolution and change: a party in general has to go through several stages of development, which can be influenced by different factors, such as institutional context, threshold levels, conditions of the political opportunity structure, voters' preferences. Each stage presents different challenges, which can be general or country specific. Schematically described, we can distinguish three main stages, or phases of development. A first stage consists in surpassing the threshold of representation in order to gain political visibility. The second stage is the consolidation phase, where the party has to deal with aspects related to its internal organisation and structure. At this stage, it is important for the party to be able to build an image of coherence and stability to keep the electoral support and attract new voters. A third stage is when a party is able to reach government responsibility and/or a certain degree of political influence. In this case, it can be necessary for a party to redefine its party politics, for example distance itself from some radical positions which might have characterised the party's most recent past.

These stages interest all radical right parties, although the direction of development is of course not necessarily linear and progressive. Support or hurdles to party development can depend on several circumstances, for instance the party's internal structure and organisation and the environment in which the party operates. Several Western European radical right parties have nonetheless and in a relatively short time come through all three stages, which means that their position is now changed in relation to the past.

Today, several radical right parties exercise more than a limited influence on the political system. A recent study states that radical right parties do in fact matter (Williams 2006) also if they are placed at the electoral margins in the political landscape. This is also why the radical right phenomenon today cannot be explained as a deviant case, or as the result of a temporary form of protest against mainstream parties. Also the high mortality rate among small parties of recent formation has in the case of the radical right proven incorrect.

Alleanza Nazionale, whose leadership would nowadays hardly mention Mussolini, Evola or Gentile as its intellectual fathers. Just like party literature and party programmes, a party doctrine is subject to change, according to transformations of different kinds, involving the political opportunity structure and choices of party strategy.

²⁷ A detailed indication of a lifespan model can be found for example in Mogens Pedersen (1988). Despite their importance, the institutional and situational conditions characterising the different phases that Pedersen calls declaration, authorization, representation and decline are not emphasised here, but rather the parties' work on the ideological platform as far as different conditions and opportunities relate to different main stages of the party lifetime.

At the time of writing, several Western European radical right parties that had their electoral breakthrough in the mid-1980s and 1990s have experienced some degree of government responsibility. The three parties considered here are the first and clear examples of this development: they have survived some important stages of evolution and there is reason to expect that this has required a re-evaluation and perhaps transformation of their political programmes, as a consequence of their involvement in political decision making and policy impact. The analysis will therefore pay attention to the direction party ideology has developed over time and in particular in relation to the different phases of the party life.

The background history of the three parties offers good premises for research in the way mentioned above. It is in fact about two decades since scholars began to be interested in the rise of the radical right parties in Western Europe. The scholarly literature on this field intensified significantly around the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, at a time where most of the radical right parties still represented a peripheral phenomenon, but were electorally increasingly significant.

On the other side, the radical right, which managed to 'leave the ghetto' and achieve electoral acknowledgement had a very hard job to do to consolidate its electoral support. The fact that several radical right parties have survived important stages of party development gives more elements for a comparative analysis that can break with an approach that is often limited to an analysis of the reasons for the radical right electoral breakthrough and success. Some steps in this direction have already been taken by a number of recent scholarly studies (see e.g. Minkenberg 2001; Williams 2006; Mudde 2007), which consider more carefully the radical right political content and impact, rather than an explanation of its emergence and success. The position achieved by these parties has drawn attention to the importance of the radical right policies and discourses and on their effect on mainstream parties and on policy making processes.

In his work on party ideology, Seliger mentions for example that there are in effect two important dimensions forming the ideology of a party (Seliger 1976: 108): a *fundamental* and an *operative* dimension. The *fundamental dimension* is found in party programmes and party official documents and consists of the central statements and foundations of party ideology. According to Seliger, moral principles are here placed at the centre. Around these, in a sort of 'feeding-up constellation', we find other interacting components, including the means available for the implementation of these values, the examination of their impact and the definition of the politics, which allow realising the maximum of these values.

However, the politics of a party have to cope with the political context within which the party operates. This means that competition with other parties, feedback from the electorate and eventually participation in government often call for a re-evaluation of the political strategies and politics of a party. This creates what Seliger defines as the *operative dimension* of party ideology, where short-term, more pragmatic and inevitably empirically oriented political goals prevail.

Both ideological dimensions are important to explore party ideology and the way it has developed and changed over time. The two dimensions also draw attention to the fact that ideology is not a static formulation of goals and beliefs, but a more dynamic construction which is highly influenced by the conditions and situation of the surrounding environment.

As a methodological guideline for an empirical study aiming at positioning a party ideological standpoint, Seliger considers both the party fundamental and operative ideology dimensions. This suggests that it is important to look at the ideology of a party both within a specific party systems (in relation to other parties and the conditions within which the party operates) and in a comparative perspective (with similar – or allegedly similar – parties in other countries).

3.4 On the different methodological approaches to the study of party ideology: a critical assessment

Dealing with party ideology opens up the question about how to analyse the material available. As an important methodological aspect of this chapter, it deserves to be discussed and explained in more detail.

Very schematically, there are two approaches to the analysis of party ideology: a *quantitative* and a *qualitative* approach. Several comparative studies on party ideology and strategy use the *quantitative approach*. One of the most important examples is the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), which today dominates the comparative study of party ideology in Europe. Over the years, the scholars affiliated with this project have compiled a large amount of documents, which have been filed in a party manifesto database (see Budge et al. 1987). The CMP's dataset is the most extensively validated set of policy estimates, collecting cross-national data on the content of party manifestos, which date back to the first elections held after WWII. Party manifestos are coded according to a measuring of most debated issues. These are then clustered in a number of 'domains' by means of a factor analysis, revealing how single issues closely relate to each other forming broad areas of the political debate. The underlying coding procedure which is used to plug in the party manifestos is represented by the sentence. More precisely, the dataset provides information on the number of quasi-sentences found in each party manifesto, which can be related to a specific topic.

The strength of this method is that it enables comparisons across time and space. Its weakness is the closure of the coding scheme, which cannot be changed without jeopardising its ability to allow the comparative research. Another main limitation of the manifesto project dataset is that its main aim was to develop a measure of the placement of political parties on a traditional left-right scale (cf. Green Pedersen 2006). Therefore, the analysis on new issues is still limited and does not grant the same level of precision.

The use of expert surveys is another method to explore party ideology and in particular to indicate party position. Expert surveys consist of ratings made by qualified political scientists in established democracies on a party position on the national political system (Laver and

Hunt 1992). But as already observed for the comparative manifesto project, this kind of analysis indicates the party placement in the national political arena and in relation to parties or families of parties in other countries, but it is not able to specify if and where there are ideological differences and similarities.

The quantitative method that can be used for the analysis of party ideology fits better in comparative analyses of a large number of parties and countries, where the scope of the analysis is to compare policies and party families rather than ideologies. Already the need to restrict the inquiry to party manifestos does not offer the possibility to integrate party ideology with other relevant sources of party literature. Besides, coding frames and procedures used by the computerised method are very inflexible and ‘unable to learn’ during the process. It is still difficult – not to say impossible – for a computerised system to discover the hierarchy, saliency and causal chain connecting different issues in a given context.²⁸

If the goal is to focus on the way ideology and a specific ideological argument is built up and develops through time, a quantitative approach can help only to the extent that it can say something about the saliency and the complexity of a specific issue, or of a cluster of issues (i.e. on the welfare state, freedom and democracy, foreign policy) in party agendas at a particular point in time or over a longer time span. In this sense, a qualitative approach is best for the empirical analysis of the material chosen for this study. In relation to what it has been said above, it is interesting to look at the way the three parties have exploited the potentials that were opened up by the emergence of new conflicting social dimensions emerging from the recent processes of post-industrialisation and globalisation, by formulating politics that can bring together a plurality of social demands. On the other side, a qualitative comparative analysis of party ideology highlights possible ideological convergences which may have taken place among the parties and/or the differences that remain among them.

The method adopted for the analysis of party ideology can be characterised as a qualitative extensive textual analysis. This method refers to a research process which has already been used in a few other studies of comparative radical right party ideology and which involves different steps of analysis (see Mudde 2000, but also Gardberg 1993). A first step consists in the careful and extensive reading of the literature available, which attempts to frame what kind of ideological dimensions and issues characterise the party. At this point, it is not only important to be aware of the differences among the three parties, but also to observe how the same party may have changed focus and position over time in relation to some issues. At this stage, some attention has also to be paid to the argumentative strategies, style and rhetoric that the three parties employ in their agendas. However, the aim of this chapter is to look at (describe and compare) *what* the three parties say, rather than *how* they say it. References to

²⁸ This interpretation is perhaps a little too schematic. In fact, there are approaches which today offer effective quantitative methods and tools for qualitative textual analysis, for example the qualitative text analysis using the software NVivo. The efficacy of NVivo is still limited by the availability of documents in digitalized form. But in many cases, large parts of the party material are still only available on paper (particularly ‘old’ party literature).

the semantic of the discourse (see i.e. Van Dijk 1993) are therefore only be considered to a limited extent in the following pages and only in those few cases where they can help to better explain an ideological argumentation or causal chain, but they do not represent one of the main interests of this study.

As may be expected, the character of the party literature that will be considered seldom deals with one topic at time. This is why it is important to be aware of the *causal* chain linking the different ideological arguments and discourses (see also Mudde 2000). The direction of the argumentation is often hierarchically organised and the meaning of a period or section can be understood only by discovering the underlying relationship. An example is a passage of a party programme which deals with welfare state problems, but where the causal relation leads to the core of the argument represented by immigration and its impact on public spending. This is why it is important to understand how different arguments can be articulated in relation to each other and where the focal point of the argumentation can be found.²⁹

But the initial qualitative textual reading of party ideology is not in itself ensuring that all the most relevant ideological dimensions are taken into account. The risk is to explore party literature against the background of a pre-made approach and frame, which inevitably can result in putting emphasis only on some few and manifest ideological features. This kind of approach characterises several studies of the radical right ideology. Party ideology is in these cases locked into an interpretative frame that is shaped when the phenomenon is considered, for example, to have its origins in post-war fascism, populism or new politics.

Keeping this risk in mind, the list of the most relevant ideological dimensions that can help structure and carry out the comparative analysis of the three parties is defined on the basis of a combined strategy. An anticipation of this can be described in a sort of ‘mapping and comparing’ the ideological dimensions considered in some of the most relevant works on the radical right. This preliminary exploration will also include the features which emerged from the analysis of the three main hypotheses introduced in Chapter 2 (cf. Table 2.1).

The three hypotheses also indicate a possible path of development of radical right party ideology. Within such an interpretative framework, it is expected that the period of emergence and electoral breakthrough of a party is mainly characterised by an emphasis on populist issues, which appeal to those voters who – for different reasons (related also to national specific situations) – were clearly discontent with the status quo and can convey their dissatisfaction by voting for a radical right party. But protest and populism are an inadequate strategy in the

²⁹ Discourse theory speaks about ‘nodal points’, whose function is to create and sustain the identity of a certain discourse by constructing a knot of definite meaning (Torfing 2003: 98). A nodal point cannot stay alone, in the sense that alone it is an absent fullness that needs to be loaded with more precise substantive contents, which people are able to recognize and identify with. Examples of nodal points are ‘the nation’, ‘democracy’, ‘the people’: the meaning of these words is so overloaded that they can actually signify everything and nothing. But it is precisely the apparent emptiness that makes their role as unifiers of a discourse possible. The concept of a nodal point is part of the system of concepts developed by the two scholars Laclau and Mouffe (1985) in their discourse theory. According to the explorative and empirical character of this study, the discourse theory here only informs the analysis of party ideology, but it is not going to be used as a theoretical framework.

long run. Therefore, it is likely that the following step in development of party ideology goes in the direction of new cleavages and value politics. In this case, the opposition to globalisation and the emphasis on the risks of marginalisation may characterise a transitory phase towards a clearer definition and development of exclusionary identity politics, where the role played by ethnic belonging, culture, values and principles is given a first place in the politics of the party.

In reality, the path concretely followed by each of the three parties analysed is very likely to deviate from the simplified order indicated above. However, this schematic way to proceed has the advantage of indicating a pattern, where different stages of party development are taken into account. Deviations and overlaps are certainly going to characterise the empirical results and one of the tasks of the comparative approach is to explain why this occurs.

To indicate how the main hypotheses can explain the development of radical right ideology is here also considered a way to make more explicit what several scholars have already said. Few would contest the importance played by the national component and by politics of belonging and identity for the radical right today. There is also a clear indication that assimilationist positions are winning ground not just among radical right parties but also among mainstream parties. However, it is necessary to look closer at how this has taken place in the three cases and what other features characterise the ideology of the parties today.

The following section looks at the ideological dimensions defined by the three hypotheses. The main challenge is represented by the attempt to regroup different and relevant issues into a limited but exhaustive set of basic categories, with the help of the existing theories. The categories so outlined should be able to capture the underlying dimensions of radical right ideological development, the similarities and differences among the three parties and their political impact on mainstream politics.

3.5 The radical right main ideological dimensions

As argued several times in this study, genuinely comparative studies of radical right parties have – at least until recently – been quite underrepresented in academic research. There are some few contributions in this direction which are worth noticing, though. The short and early study by Annvi Gardberg (1993) on the ideological profile of four Western European radical right parties is perhaps among the first real attempts to look at the similarities and differences of four parties by taking into account party programmes and interviews with leading members of the four parties.

In order to clarify the meanings and to establish adequate working definitions for the ideological characteristics of the radical right parties (cf. Gardberg 1993), the author distinguishes among six different broad approaches: neo-fascism; extreme right; nationalism; xenophobia or racism; neo-conservative and neo-liberal; populism and protest. Each approach then specifies a number of ideological elements that the author tests on the empirical material. The comparative analysis highlights a few important differences and similarities among the par-

ties. However, the study only pays little attention to the ideological development and transformation.

Another comparative study on the ideology of five extreme right wing parties³⁰ is done by Cas Mudde (Mudde 2000), who also considers different ideological features: nationalism; exclusionism; xenophobia; the strong state; socio-economic policy; populist anti-party sentiments; democracy and ethical values. Some of these (nationalism, exclusionism, xenophobia, the strong state) are mentioned as main indicators for the ideology of the extreme right (Mudde 2000: 24). The list of radical right main ideological dimensions is based on an extensive reading of the existing literature on the topic, from which the author completed a list of the most important features for the analysis of extreme right wing ideology (Mudde 1995; 1996).

In 26 definitions of right wing extremism that Mudde found in the literature, no less than 58 features were actually mentioned at least one time. However, only five of these features were mentioned, in one form or another, by at least half of the authors, namely: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy and the strong state (see Mudde 1996). It is with reference to these issues that Mudde carries out a comparative analysis of party ideology. Only few other dimensions are considered, when they may turn out to be of particular importance for the ideological foundation of one of the parties analysed in his comparative study.

Compared to Gardberg's study, the definition of a limited number of issues is in effect more suitable for a comparative analysis of party ideology, which is already complicated by the different country-specific features. Structuring the analysis into few core ideological dimensions allows the author to concentrate on relevant aspects of party ideology and to disclose eventual similarities, differences and convergences in the politics developed by the cases studied. This is clearly not an easy task, but it is often the ambition to create perfect models of comparison that often discourages research in the direction of comparative politics.

The present comparative study is partly inspired by the methodological approach suggested by Gardberg and Mudde, but with some important differences. The two authors tend to privilege an approach in which there is no clear indication of the stage of development of the parties considered. This means that the guiding principle behind these methods is to consider a large sample of studies on the radical right, dealing with known and less known parties of the Western European radical right. According to Mudde, this way of sorting the literature ensures that relevant dimensions of radical right wing party ideology are not missed; a problem that can arise for example when the literature is limited from the beginning to the analysis of the 'usual suspects', i.e. the scholarly more 'popular' radical right parties such as the French Front National. And yet, the selection of the relevant ideological dimensions depends on what kind of explanation and hypotheses characterise the studies, which are taken into account and significantly also on the history and role of the parties considered. In this sense,

³⁰ The parties are the two German parties *Die Republikaner* and *Deutsche Volkunion*, the Belgian *Vlaams Blok*, the two Dutch *Centrumdemocraten* and *Centrumpartij* '86.

much of the analysis of radical right ideology lacks a more critical assessment of the dimensions considered. The key ideological categories of radical right party ideology in reality lean against a classic interpretation of the phenomenon of right wing extremism. This approach is also framed by studies on neo-fascism and post-war extremism, where dimensions such as anti-democracy, anti-parliamentarism, strong state nationalism, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories are included in the framework. More recently, Ignazi (see Chapter 1) has updated the analysis of right wing extremism suggesting to distinguish between old and new extreme right wing parties, where anti-democracy and the strong state are still on the agenda, but their relevance is essential to define the legacies of the contemporary extreme right to the past (the more important these features are for a party, the closer the party is to the old extreme right wing).

In this chapter the main ideological dimensions for the radical right ideology are operationalised with the help of the existing and more recent literature and – as mentioned – with the help of the hypotheses introduced in Chapter 1. Interpreting the rise of a radical right party within a specific theoretical framework undoubtedly contributes to emphasising some aspects of party ideology and politics rather than others. It is therefore important to make more explicit what kind of ideological dimensions are considered relevant and in relation to what main interpretation.

The three main approaches are the new political cleavages, the anti-globalisation and welfare chauvinist approach and the protest anti-establishment and populist approach. As observed in Chapter 2, these approaches are still the most widespread in the recent literature on the radical right, both in analyses of single national cases and in cross-national comparative studies, and their implications are often (more or less explicitly) considered independent variables for the study of the vote to the radical right party. In the following, the task is to look at what kind of ideological dimensions originate from the three hypotheses when they are considered in relation to radical right ideology.

The attempt is to open up a realm of different ideological ‘combinations’ when dealing with the analysis of the empirical material. This means that instead of starting from an a priori definition of a ‘winning formula’, which later needs to be adjusted and justified according to the cases which deviate from the formula, the ideological issues related to the three hypotheses can here empirically help locate the party in a two-dimensional political space created by a classical socio-economic left-right dimension and by a libertarian/authoritarian dimension (some prefer to define this more neutrally as a cultural and value dimension) where new issues such as immigration demarcate the position of the party, in this case in relation to its ideological position. It is important to underline that the positioning of a party is not to be considered static, but liable to change, particularly in relation to different phases of its development, or more simply the party life-course.

This allows suggesting a development pattern for radical right wing ideology. Most likely, some of the issues matured during the first phases of the party life, which mainly char-

acterised the party's breakthrough and role while they are going to be strongly underemphasised in later phases of the party development; it is for example the case of populist and anti-establishment claims. The phases of party maturity and government responsibility are also expected to influence the ideology of these parties significantly, in the direction of less extreme positions and more compromise seeking politics. Being in government as a support partner or as part of a government coalition undoubtedly gives better access to institutional channels of influence, allowing greater visibility in the political arena and increased legislative power. This may also have given rise to strategies from mainstream parties trying to co-opt salient issues from the radical right.

Theory suggests that government responsibility has a 'return impact' on the ideology of the radical right that can be visible in the party's self-restraint on positions that could be judged far too extreme in a government situation. Furthermore, it is expected that the greater visibility in the political arena obliges the party to enhance issues other than those that have contributed to its electoral breakthrough, such as anti-immigration in the case of the radical right parties. In this sense, government responsibility contributes to a change of the political agenda of the radical right in the direction of less radical positions and a more diversified agenda setting. At any rate, does this development actually epitomise what in effect has happened to the empirical cases considered in this study? And if there is reason to believe that government responsibility affects the agenda of the radical right, how is this documented in the empirical cases at hand?

Since it would be difficult, not to say impossible, to look at the development of radical right party ideology in a comparative perspective without considering the transformations that have taken place over time, the empirical analysis considers three phases of the history and ideology of these parties, which will be introduced and explained further in Chapter 4, but roughly sketched consist of: an initial breakthrough and formative phase; a phase of consolidation and maturity and a third phase of influence and government responsibility.

3.6 The new political cleavage hypothesis: ideological dimensions for the study of the radical right parties

In his comparative analysis of the radical right in Western Europe, Herbert Kitschelt explicitly refers to the hypothesis of new social and political cleavages. The emergence of the radical right parties is considered an outcome of the transformations brought about by post-industrialisation and by the increasing internationalisation of the markets. In his words (Kitschelt 1995: vii):

The social structure and economy of advanced capitalism have given salience to a competitive dimension of politics with two aspects: economically leftist (redistributive) and politically as well as culturally libertarian (participatory and individualist) positions at one extreme and economically rightist, freemarketeering as well as politically and culturally authoritarian positions at the other.

The framework that Kitschelt uses for the analysis of the radical right is directly derived from what the author used to explain the rise of left libertarian parties in his book on the transformation of European Social Democracy (Kitschelt 1994). Together, the two books form a comprehensive reading and explanation of the dynamics and factors which gave rise to new parties on both the left and the right wing of the political spectrum. The emergence of these parties is described in close relationship to the political processes that in the context of advanced post-industrial capitalism brought about a significant redefinition of what was traditionally considered the political left and right.

The electoral appeal of the new parties on the right and on the left is therefore interpreted in relation to the major changes in the working structure and living conditions of today's post-industrial societies, where new kinds of values and new forms of political demands have emerged. In short, these transformations have – according to Kitschelt – provoked a process of ideological convergence of mainstream parties towards the centre, following the purpose of maximising the vote of the moderate electorate. This pursuit of the median voter is considered to have opened up free areas of political action for a new (or 'renewed') radical authoritarian right and for new libertarian parties on the left wing. In this sense, Kitschelt considers the success of the new radical right as highly dependent on the opportunity and ability of these parties (supply side) to adjust their programs and their electoral strategies to the new demands (demand side). As Kitschelt observes (Kitschelt 1995: 3):

The sociological account of right-authoritarian politics remains incomplete without a reconstruction of the strategies of political entrepreneurs that seize on opportunities to build genuinely new right-authoritarian parties

This interpretation takes the political opportunity structure as an important factor to explain the rise of the new radical right. Two main ideological dimensions are seen as characterising the politics of the radical right: a freemarketeering neo-liberal position in socioeconomic policy and an authoritarian position in the value dimension.

However, in relation to the aim of this chapter, which is a more precise definition of the radical right ideological dimensions, it is important to look closer at the way Kitschelt (as well as other authors referring to this hypothesis) concretely gives the two dimensions mentioned above contents (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 The new political cleavages hypothesis: ideological dimensions for the new radical right

Social process	Ideological dimensions	Characteristics
Post-industrialism	Socio economic policy	Freemarketeering neo-liberalism, flat/proportional taxation, spontaneous market allocation, free industrial growth, environment under material production
	Exclusionary politics	Restrictive immigration policy; narrow definition of citizenship rights; narrow entitlement to civic rights; emphasis on community and cultural/ethnic homogeneity; islamophobia
Internationalisation/ Globalisation	State and political organisation	Strong state; law and order (harder punishments for crimes); collective norm compliance; hierarchical choice procedures
	Traditional values	Cultural conservatism; emphasis on Christian values and principles; authoritarianism; (protestant) ethic of hard work; traditional gender roles; rigorous parental childrearing; antiabortion

Source: Own elaboration from Kitschelt 1995.

According to Kitschelt, the freemarket and neo-liberal position promoted by the radical right is almost a direct and natural consequence of the opening up of a global market economy following the post-industrialization process.

In electoral terms, the exposure to global economy is more likely to promote a positive reaction for politics endorsing spontaneous market allocation and proportional (flat) taxation, rather than redistributive welfare state measures and progressive taxation. This erodes the target groups in favour of welfare chauvinist appeals, consequently undermining the electoral support to parties promoting this kind of politics (cf. Kitschelt 1995).

The history of several radical right parties seemed actually to support this thesis. During the 1980s and part of the 1990s, several of nowadays radical right parties (or their predecessors) were known for their neo-liberal and freemarket politics, which often went along with proposals for severe tax reductions.

These politics were deemed to fall soon after, but it was difficult to imagine that this position could be drastically turned into pro-welfare politics. It is what happened for example in Denmark with the Danish People's Party in the mid-1990s. As we will carefully examine in Chapter 5, the party has now become a strong supporter of traditional welfare politics, where the condition of the old, the sick and the less privileged rates high on the party agenda.

The substantial difference from universal welfare politics is that the welfare supported by these parties is not 'for all', but consists of a system of social protection including and belonging first of all to the ethnically homogeneous community, which – in the party's words – has paid for it by 'hard work and savings'. Within this understanding of welfare politics, immigrants are depicted as freeloaders, who have not directly helped build the system and nonetheless are today claiming its benefits. This position is considered to have increased the support from the blue-collar constituency.

The emphasis on neo-liberal and pro-market economics has recently been subject to extensive criticism (cf. e.g. Ivarsflaten 2005). The recent development of the radical right suggests that this formula was not necessarily the one chosen by the radical right. This implies that there may be alternatives to the radical right ‘winning formula’ suggested by Kitschelt. Kitschelt himself does not ignore the possibility of ‘blended appeals’ (see Kitschelt 1995). More recently, he has suggested that a more viable and ‘weaker’ form of the new radical right formula can emerge. It is characterised by ‘a mute appeal to freemarket liberalism [which] might be sufficient to satisfy the small business constituency without alienating blue-collar workers’ (Kitschelt 2005). But this political compromise is considered viable only until the party does not have government responsibilities.

The alternative interpretation is that the radical right parties – particularly in countries with established welfare states – have deliberately given up the neo-liberal agenda, adopting a form of welfare politics as a more and more advantageous strategic position. Within a new cleavage framework, this shift of political strategy could also be explained by the fact that the libertarian left, traditionally guardian of politics of redistribution of scarce resources, began to have difficulties satisfying an electorate consisting of both materialist and post-materialist voters. The ‘materialist’ voters could not really recognise themselves in the libertarian and multicultural politics promoted by the left-wing parties, which meant that they might feel more attracted by the authoritative and anti-multiculturalist position characterising the radical right. In this case, the shift from a neo-liberal and anti-tax position to welfare chauvinist politics cleared the reservations and made the radical right almost an obvious alternative for the materialist electorate.³¹

However, the socio-economic agenda of the radical right is not considered to matter so much, particularly in the context drawn by the new cleavage approach. Recent studies tend to confirm this hypothesis, arguing that among the grievances explaining the populist right vote in some countries ‘only one of these grievances – the one over immigration – was consistently mobilised by all successful populist right parties’ (Ivarsflaten 2006).

These results give even more significance to the new cleavage hypothesis, according to which especially non-economic and value issues nowadays structure party competition and mobilise voters. Significantly, in a recently published book on the populist radical right (note that he no longer uses the term extreme right), Mudde (2007) has given a chapter the unambiguous title: ‘It’s not the economy, stupid!’³² The chapter challenges what Mudde calls ‘the most widespread and fervent misperceptions in the field, i.e. the importance of neo-liberal economics to the ideological program and electoral success of the populist radical right family’ (2007: 136).

³¹ This reading is clearly influenced by the thesis on ‘working class authoritarianism’ discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 32).

³² The wording makes a little fun of a sign that was said to be hanging in the office of former US president Clinton to remind him every day that it is economy that matters.

Economics, argues Mudde, 'is a secondary issue to the populist radical right party family, the parties instrumentalise it to pursue their primary ideological agenda, i.e. nativism, authoritarianism and populism' (2007: 137). Going back to Kitschelt (see Table 2.1, chapter 2), the ideological dimensions which at the end are considered to really matter are: exclusionary politics, state, political organization and traditional values.

Not surprisingly, it is the ideological content and meaning of these three indicative dimensions which present studies highlight and examine more carefully, when dealing with the radical right. Questions of culture, identity, national feelings and religious tolerance therefore represent the core issues in the recent literature (e.g. Betz 2009; Akkerman & Hagelund 2007). However, one could argue that this approach suggests again an 'either-or' solution (see also Cole 2005), which may turn out to be too rigid, particularly in the long run.

This conclusion leaves little space to a more careful evaluation of how the radical right political agenda answers to the different challenges posed by society, which is squeezed from the outside by immigration flows, market forces and the like and from within by national interests, a national social and political context and the conditions created by the opportunity structure .

It could be argued that one of Kitschelt's contributions to the studies of the radical right was to emphasise the role that economics and *old* politics still play for the radical right. His approach differed from the part of the literature that considered the emergence of the radical right more as a reaction – or 'silent counter-revolution' (Ignazi 1992) – against the issues and politics developed by the left libertarian movements of the 1960s.

Within this interpretation, the position of neo-liberal politics is considered important in particular for the previous 'wave' of the radical right development. In a classical article, Von Beyme (1988) distinguishes among three main phases in the history of the radical right in Western Europe: a first wave of neo-fascist parties, emerging in the aftermath of WWII; a second wave of tax revolt, which started in France during the mid-1950s with Poujade's party; and a third and most recent xenophobic wave beginning approximately in the mid-1980s. Von Beyme argues that there is an important discontinuity in the history and development of radical right parties and that each of the main three waves can be distinguished based on the dominance of specific issues. The most recent wave is dominated by xenophobic, or at least anti-immigration politics, whereas the precedent wave was dominated by tax protest and populist issues. Betz (1994) seemed to support this hypothesis, arguing that already from the mid-1980s, many radical right parties have diverted the emphasis from economic liberalism upon exclusionary politics, nativism and islamophobia.

Most of the issues belonging to this new dimension are included under the definition of authoritarian politics (sometimes also defined as materialist, new right or neo-conservative politics), which represents a sort of 'political container' for different and often very diverse issues, such as anti-immigration politics, Islamophobia, law and order, authoritarian childrearing, defence of traditional values and so forth.

As mentioned above, in comparative radical right party ideology, this dimension is connected to issues like identitary politics, nativism, national culture, authoritarianism, and traditional values (see i.e. Gardberg 1993), or more largely in politics of exclusionism, xenophobia, ethical values and the strong state (i.e. Mudde 2000). Considering the importance of this dimension, it is important to find out how it can be operationalised and structured, so that it can be effectively applied in a comparative analysis of party ideology. A careful reading of Kitschelt (see Table 3.1 above) is helpful. In his analysis he distinguishes among three major thematic fields: 1) exclusionary politics: where anti-immigration and exclusionary politics represent the main subject; 2) state and institutional organization: dealing with the position of the party on matters concerning how the state and its institutions must be organized, ruled and controlled; 3) politics about traditional values: indicating the standpoint on matters concerning the family, gender roles, childrearing and more broadly questions of culture, values and religious character.

This way of grouping different political issues into main thematic areas is expected to give a clearer structure to the empirical analysis of comparative party ideology and to leave space to additions and observations in relation to the three parties considered. It also allows drawing clearer lines between what can be defined as the authoritarian elements characterising these parties from the reaction against the challenges posed by the recent immigration flows and integration.

3.7 Main ideological dimensions relate to the marginalisation or the winners' and losers' interpretative approach

The second approach considered in Chapter 2 is the so-called marginalisation or winners and losers hypothesis. Also in relation to this approach, the aim is to be able to find the most relevant features of this particular interpretative approach, which can help make this hypothesis operational for an analysis of radical right party ideology in a comparative perspective (at least for the three parties considered). Concretely, this means to be able to observe how the competition between globalisation 'winners' and 'losers' can be translated into a potential field for a political mobilisation within a national political context and how this has been exploited by three case studies in the respective national contexts. This means to be able to disclose how party ideology in the three cases strategically emphasised questions indicating that one of the main problems of advanced capitalist societies nowadays is the increasing marginalisation of distinct social groups.

This task is far from straightforward, since support for the marginalisation hypothesis is often traced on the basis of an analysis of the radical right voters' socioeconomic background and attitudes. In these studies, an overrepresentation of unemployed on benefits and low skilled manual workers is considered an indicator of a potential economic and societal marginalisation, which can help explain why these social groups vote for a radical right party.

However, the analysis of the demand side (the voters) often takes the supply side (the party), in this case radical right party ideology, as given beforehand.

Depending on how important this group of voters is in terms of electoral support, the party is expected to respond with a critique against the globalisation process. This can for example take the form of a critique against the socioeconomic consequences of the increasing internationalisation of trade and the openness of the labour market. Within this interpretative framework, immigrants are likely to be considered as competitors on the labour market and in the distribution of social benefits. Particularly in Scandinavia, where welfare state and social rights are based on citizenship and residence rather than contribution, immigrants can be targets of argumentations dealing with their economic dependency on and their costs to the public system at large. Radical right parties can then exploit the electoral potentials of this discourse, emphasising the relationship between immigration, welfare costs and labour competition.

However, several analyses show that often there is little evidence of the correlation between labour market position, or ‘welfare dependence’ and attitude towards immigrants, neither between welfare dependence and support for right wing populism (see e.g. Goul Andersen 2006). This suggests that there must be other elements than the strict relationship linking marginalisation to the fear of downward economic and social mobility.

Immigrants can be perceived as less ‘deserving’ than the indigenous population, but not necessarily –or at least not only– because there is a generalised fear among the most disadvantaged groups about the possibility that foreigners put in danger the economic and consequently social situation. But this position is not translated into anti-welfare politics; rather the welfare state is considered a right for those – mostly meaning the native population – who have paid for it. In the Danish case, for example, adherents of the Danish People’s Party are more supportive of the ‘classic’ welfare arrangements than adherents of any other party (Goul Andersen 2006; see also Chapter 9 here), showing that increasing support for the Danish People’s Party is not accompanied by declining support for the welfare state. This should give the chance to reflect on the assumptions linked to the marginalisation hypothesis.

Some scholars (Kriesi et al. 2006) suggest a wider interpretation of the consequences of globalisation, particularly in terms of the transformation they set off in the national political space. Three mechanisms are considered behind the formation of winners and losers dynamics: economic competition, cultural diversity and political competition. While the first dimension basically has economic implications, cultural diversity and political competition relate to the opening of another competition field, where winners and losers face their different interests and position on cultural matters. An open and cosmopolitan approach to ethnic difference (the winners’ position) challenges a national protectionist cultural perspective, where ethnically different populations are considered a potential threat to collective identities and the standard of living (the losers’ position).

The different positions and interests developed by globalisation winners and globalisation losers have been appropriately articulated by traditional and new political actors/entrepreneurs according to the electoral group the party aimed to reach (see Kriesi et al. 2006; Kriesi et al. 2008). Radical right parties distinguished themselves because they elaborated politics which are primarily addressed to the losers of globalisation. Therefore, their politics are strongly influenced by comprehensive protectionism and differentialist nativism (Betz 2001).

It is the parties that have appealed to the interests and fears of the losers, which (quite unexpectedly for much of the scholarly literature, could one argue!) have become a driving force in the transformation of the European party systems.

When the marginalisation hypothesis relates socioeconomic considerations with aspects related to the cultural implications of globalisation, it starts to overlap with the new political cleavage hypothesis discussed above. However, some aspects still distinguish the two approaches. As we have just seen, the marginalisation hypothesis considers the development of the radical right parties as the translation into politics of the consequences of globalisation, as experienced from the most disadvantaged social groups. Furthermore, the transformation of the national political space is not seen as the result of a wide reorganisation of values or interests, which had the individual as an aware actor supporting the change.

It is the tensions and conflicts set off by the globalisation process, which are at the origin of a demand for politics responding to the new social and economic situation. This means also that there is much less focus on the formation of new social and political cleavages and on the reading of radical right politics as a counter-reaction to the emergence of a new left. The globalisation process has not created new areas of conflict, but has rather emphasised the existing national and cultural conflict dimension (see Kriesi et al. 2008). These dynamics are represented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 The marginalisation approach and its main dimensions

Dimensions	Characteristics	Issues
Economic dimension	National protectionism; welfare chauvinism	General anti-globalisation positions; market protectionist measures; anti-Americanism; local vs. global
Cultural dimension	Anti-multiculturalism; national/local vs. global and international	Cultural protectionism; emphasis on Western values and principles: emphasis on difference (national/regional/local)

3.8 Populism, protest vote and anti-establishment: ideological dimensions

Populism and protest are frequently used attributes in relation to the three parties examined in this study. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this is often explicit already in the terminology imposed on these parties, where compound names such as radical right-wing populism (cf. Betz 1994 and more recently Mudde 2007), or new populist/protest parties (cf. Taggart 1996) are

rather widespread and accepted. Alternatively, the implications of anti-establishment politics and populism are taken up in country-specific analysis of a party, its history and the national settings and opportunity structure (i.e. Kitschelt 1995).

The fact that populism and protest are often mentioned in relation to different situations and contexts also makes a clear definition of the ideological dimensions difficult. It is also rather unclear whether a party can develop different forms of 'populism' over time and whether at a certain stage of its development, a party can move away from early forms of populist protest and reaction. All in all, it is therefore difficult to identify which implications and consequences are related to the populist nature of a party.

The difficulty to come to terms with how populism and protest are considered as ideological dimensions has its origins in the same literature dealing with the phenomenon, where observations and remarks about populist *ideology* and populist *strategy* are often mixed together. However, this chapter aims to outline at least some of the most relevant ideological features related to the populist and protest hypothesis. This will be done by looking directly and more concretely at the way the populist and protest thesis is 'processed' in some of the most relevant studies on the radical right. As anticipated, the literature considered is seldom characterised by clear-cut theoretical approaches. Only few analyses (see Taggart 2000; Meny & Surel 2002) go deeper into an inquiry of what populism and protest entail at the ideological level.

Populism and protest are often considered within a broader context of macrostructural transformations, such as the loss of importance of the ideologies that have signed the social, political and historical development in the 19th and 20th centuries. But populism and protest are even more clearly seen as opportunity and country dependent reactions. Particularly in some national context and at times when this was electorally appealing, the radical right parties emphasised the malfunctioning of the public sector and on the untruthfulness of the political elite. According to Kitschelt, it is particularly at the beginning of a party history that this strategy can ensure a broader electoral constituency. In this sense, populism is very much a country dependent condition. For Kitschelt, anti-statist populist parties are more likely to emerge and be successful in countries where patronage politics and clientelism have traditionally nourished the political system. For this reason, the parties which are often qualified as unequivocally anti-statist populist parties are the Austrian Freedom Party and the Northern League. Austria and Italy are in fact countries where forms of clientelist party politics have been quite widespread, particularly during the 1980s. In the late 1970s and the 1980s, due to different reasons, both countries began to see clientelist linkages between citizens and politicians as an unacceptable political habit and this resulted in a rapid decline in the electoral support for democracy and political trust.

Betz (2002) argues that the initial phase of mobilisation and electoral success of the radical right depends largely on the ability of the party to exploit the existing popular *ressentiment*. This is again a country specific condition, which is not necessarily related to immigra-

tion or other general macrostructural changes such as post-industrialisation and globalisation. In this sense, the definition of populist protest suits these parties well, since it reflects the feelings of dissatisfaction and discontent with the established elites (Betz 2002).

Populism is particularly manifest at the national level, even if, as we will see, some of the critique and scepticism against the national political elite has been extended to the European political class in recent years. Critique of the establishment is usually seen in opposition to the ‘will of the people (...) supreme over every other standard’ (Shils 1956: 98). This is also why populist parties often have demands for popular referenda on their agenda, so that people can be more often and directly involved in decision making during the legislative process.

However, the exploitation of the populist anti-establishment protest particularly characterises the electoral breakthrough and the early life of a right wing populist party. The appeal of this kind of politics is expected to weaken in the long run. This is also why populism and protest alone are unlikely to explain why some of the radical right parties have done well over time, whereas others have suffered a clear drop in electoral support (Betz 2002).

The protest vote is fleeting, so if a party is not able to profile itself as competent on other issues besides critique against the incumbent government, it is doomed to failure. It is often when the populist and protest drive are about to fade that a transition must take place. Betz argues that the populist anti-establishment position is switched with populist nationalism (Betz 1994; see Table 3.3). This implies that other issues become central on the party agenda. He indicates anti-immigration and national identity politics as the most important features, arguing that parties are also likely to change their neo-liberal agenda in favour of a more protectionist position on economic matters. As reported above, also Kitschelt supports the transition hypothesis; it is at this point of its institutional life that an anti-statist populist party takes up the socio-culturally authoritarian agenda and becomes a full-fledged new radical right party.

Table 3.3 The anti-establishment and populist approach: ideological dimensions for radical right-wing populism

Socioeconomic dynamic	Ideological dimension	Characteristics
Country-specific reaction/ <i>ressentiment</i>	Neo-liberal populism (until mid/late-1980s)	Anti-establishment politics; demand for direct popular representation (referenda); tax protest; public sector cutbacks
Globalisation	Populist nationalism/ (from mid-1980s)	Exclusionary nationalism; anti-immigration; socioeconomic protectionism, EU scepticism

However, the existing literature is not very explicit about *how* the populist and protest components develop in their transitional phase towards national populism. The question is *what* is left behind in terms of populist *ideology* and populist *strategy* from the previous period. At a general level, Betz indicates that feelings of dissatisfaction and discontent become more wide-

spread and diffuse: they gradually become associated with feelings of frustration and powerlessness that some people experience in relation to ‘the intricacies of politics in post-industrial societies’ (Betz 1994).

More specifically one can argue that internationalisation and the process of European integration also intensify this general lack of reference. This can add new saliency and content to the populist critique against the established elite (both political and intellectual), resulting in the differentiation between what will increasingly be perceived as *Us* (the people, the common citizens), looking at the nation as the appropriate focus for identity and belonging, in contrast with *Them* (the elite), identified with the unknown global, the multiethnic and supra-national (dis-)order.

The nation is identified with what Taggart (2000; 2002) calls the ‘hearthland’, representing an idealised and often retrospectively constructed conception of the community, on which the idea of ‘the people’ is constructed. It often emphasises aspects and attributes related to the idea of the nation and ‘the people’, that the party explains its position on a number of issues. As we will see, the emphasis on nationalism and national belonging allows the party to distinguish between what it is considered good and loyal nationalism and what is not. The need to tighten up immigration and to be against more EU are considered elements of good nationalism and genuine patriotism, as these processes are perceived as direct dangers to national sovereignty and national identity.

In relation to the present study, it is both interesting and important to look at the way the three case studies construct and make use of the notion of the national and ‘the people’. The three parties operate within different national frameworks, where the idea of the ‘hearthland’ – as explained by Taggart – and of the people belonging to it, can be based on different histories, accounts, ideals and traditions. A comparative analysis of nationalism and the construction of the idea of the nation in the ideology of the three parties can therefore be useful to reveal the similarities and differences on this specific and relevant subject.

An issue which has been developed over the last decade by the radical right parties is Euroscepticism, or the politics against the process of European integration. Euroscepticism is a rather complex dimension, which embraces different and contrasting positions and which can be found both on the right and the left of the political spectrum. The radical right is against the European project basically because the process of European integration is seen as undermining the sovereignty and autonomy of the member states. But the position against the European Union is matured within the same context of populist rhetoric and critique addressed against the national elite, which has then been transferred critique of the ‘bureaucrats in Brussels’. This latter political class is often put at the top of list when it comes to criticising and accusing the malaise of the political elite, whereas national politicians are portrayed as submitted conveyors of European anti-national dictates.

Another scholarly observation on Euroscepticism is that this is more pervasive among parties on the periphery of the party system (at both ends of the political spectrum). This

means that these parties are more likely than established traditional parties to use anti-EU politics as a mobilising issue (cf. Taggart 1998). Only very few studies have analysed when and how this issue has entered the agenda of the radical right parties in Western Europe and how it has been developed (and eventually softened) when a party achieved government responsibility. What happens when a Eurosceptical party joins Europositive parties in power? In view of the role played by the radical right in several European countries, this question has become even more relevant.

It is well known that several of the radical right parties which today are against (more) EU, have in their past been supportive, sometimes even enthusiastic about the process of European integration. It is the case of the Northern League, which until at least the 1990s was a great supporter of the European project. This positive approach was largely informed by the fear that Italy might be excluded from joining Maastricht Europe, which the Northern League held the South responsible for (see Betz 2002). The party later changed course and began to endorse anti-EU politics. The Northern League began to refer to notions of ethnopluralism to explain its approach to European integration, which suggests – as argued by Rydgren – that the Northern League has not been insensitive to the messages from the National Front in France (Rydgren 2003; 2005). This ethnopluralist approach is much less dominant in the Eurosceptical position of the Danish People's Party, whose main concern is the question of national sovereignty against the supra national power increasingly represented by the EU.

In the light of the recent development of the radical right and particularly in view of the fact that the three cases considered here have experienced government responsibility, it is important to look at the way the parties have tackled this issue over time. Particularly important is the need to consider this issue as a relevant feature within a broader conception of the new populism characterising these parties.

The themes that can be concretely used in the comparative analysis of party ideology highlight different typologies and recent developments of the populist and protest hypothesis. The more traditional approach and reading of the populist and protest 'dimensions' as the result of a lack of trust and dissatisfaction with the incumbent government are still feasible explanations of what populist party politics are about, perhaps still particularly for the Italian and Austrian cases. But in the framework of anti-establishment politics and political distrust, other and perhaps more complex populist expressions have emerged over the years. A form of populist Euroscepticism can today be considered another side of the phenomenon. However, opposition to European integration is not only a critique against 'the bureaucrats in Brussels'. In a context of internationalisation and globalisation, the European process is considered another – perhaps even more concrete because geographically and politically closer – danger to national identity, economy and national sovereignty at large.

The conflict between national and European interest has also been given high priority in radical right party politics regardless of the party's past position on the issue. The question is whether a softer position on European integration arises when a party achieves government

responsibility. This is also why it is important to consider how Euroscepticism has entered the agenda of the radical right parties and how it has developed over time.

3.9 Summarising the ideological dimensions

From the analysis of the three hypotheses, two main domains/dimensions have immediately emerged as important realms for an exploration of radical right ideology: a socioeconomic dimension, ‘measuring’ the position of the party on economic matters and a value and cultural dimension.

There is still strong disagreement about the importance and character of the economic dimension. Neo-liberals and freemarketing positions are in some cases still seen as the best indicators of radical right economics. However, this interpretation –which is strongly supported in Kitschelt’s ‘winning formula’ – is today criticised and challenged by alternative explanations. At present, it is not only discussed what kind of economics the radical right supports, but about how much significance economics have for the success of the radical right. Particularly at the national level, different dynamics can still influence the development of economics in one direction rather than another. And yet, Kitschelt’s interpretation is still that radical right parties (in the end) will endorse a neo-liberal and pro-market profile. Such a position is considered to have a broader electoral appeal at least for voters who would vote otherwise, considering that it may be interpreted as a far too intransigent view on immigration. In particular for parties such as the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party, whose electoral success was initially fuelled by anti-establishment and protest, the choice of neo-liberal politics is also interpreted as a convenient solution to hold an electorate in which also small entrepreneurs and low skilled white collars are strongly represented.

The question is to what extent the emphasis on exclusionary politics, anti-immigration and traditional values, which are seen as characterising the radical right today, have changed the neo-liberal approach ascribed to the radical right in the past. Instead of taking economics ‘out of the picture’ because it is not considered relevant for the electoral success of the radical right, the approach will be to consider how much relevance economics is actually given in the political agendas of the three parties and whether the contents of these politics have changed and if so in which direction. The Danish People’s Party’s campaign manifestoes will serve as an example. The party’s concise slogan was in 2001: ‘Fresh breath over the country’ (*Frisk pust over landet*), where the picture following the text shows the party’s three most prominent persons (Pia Kjaersgaard, Kristian Thulesen Dahl, Peter Skaarup) portrayed while walking forward. The image and words of the manifesto wanted to point out that the party’s main goal was to renew and change the status quo. A few years later, in spring 2007, the slogan changed into: ‘Tight immigration policy and real welfare’ (*Stram udlændingepolitik og ægte velfærd*). In 2007, the party concretely formalised its politics around two main issues: anti-immigration and the welfare state. This clear definition of the party political goal is significantly represented by an image of the three MPs now standing still in front of the camera. This is only an

example which illustrates that radical right parties are not afraid to take a clear standpoint on socioeconomic politics.

Choosing a form of exclusionary welfare can perhaps send part of the electorate away, but it can also contribute to stabilize the constituencies that have proven most loyal in the long run, such as working class voters. Whether this is a viable solution only in the specific Danish case, or an 'exportable model', is something that the comparative analysis of party ideology can partly clarify.

Anti-immigration policy and the image of the foreigner in the literature of the three parties is another dimension considered. As already mentioned elsewhere, recent studies consider anti-immigration as the most important field explaining the electoral success of various radical right parties in Europe at the national and local level. The anti-immigration issue was already relevant on these parties' agenda in the late 1980s and 1990s, but at the beginning the question targeted problems that were closely related to the type and nature of the immigration flows entering the country. After 9/11, the radical right's anti-immigration stance hardened even more. In particular, immigration is not only explained in terms of national emergency, but more broadly as an international problem relating to the clash between two different and opposite civilizations: the Western world and Islam, described as a medieval, anti-democratic and sexist culture, where the Koran is the law.

Several radical right parties had already in the past formulated their position against Islam and framed Islam in terms of culture, values, and identity. But the international events of 2001, combined with the start of the 'war against terror', gave the anti-Islam issue new legitimacy and allowed the radical right parties to promote themselves as defenders of fundamental liberal values, such as individualism, secularism, and gender equality (see Akkerman & Hagelund 2007).

All this also indicates that the 'content' of the radical right anti-immigration issue went through various phases of development. Several scholars would in fact argue that Islamophobia is today the central feature of right-wing radical ideology and programs, particularly in comparative analyses of radical right party ideology looking at 'cross-national' influences.

However, the anti-immigration stance will here be considered in terms of how the three parties have dealt with it over time. It is expected that their position (in particular after 2001) will exhibit increasing similarities in the way they tackle immigration and relate the issue to questions of values, culture and identity. However, this is something that the empirical analysis of the party ideology can help answer. It will examine how the three parties frame the anti-immigration question in terms of a threat to the national and cultural identity, i.e. the nation, the country's historical past, national proud tradition, values and identity.

The analysis of the party literature will especially focus on the way the three parties relate to a 'more classical' interpretation of authoritarianism, which includes traditionalism (parochialism), strong politics, (more or less) sexist positions and authoritarian forms of child-rearing and education. These and other items – also quoted by Kitschelt in his definition of

authoritarian politics – have in some relevant studies on authoritarianism and the authoritarian personality of the past constituted an important reference for measuring authoritarianism. Nowadays, the authoritarian attitude is more seen as a reaction against the secularised and libertarian position advanced by the left during the 1960s, which the radical right parties opposed, defending traditional values, gender roles and a less tolerant view on educational practices and sexual behaviour. However, as anticipated above, some attention has to be directed to the interplay between the traditional (some would say ‘old-fashioned’) view of gender relations and the role that the radical right has in some cases taken up as critics of women’s condition in Islamic societies and within the Islamic culture more broadly.

Populism and protest are the last issues to be discussed in relation to the dimensions opened up by the three hypotheses. As discussed in the paragraph on this issue, populism is a feature which is not so easy to map in relation to party ideology. It refers in fact to arguments against the elite and the political class, arguments emphasising the ‘will of the people’ and direct/plebiscitary democracy, politics against EU and its political class. However, there is some agreement that populism and protest are characteristic features especially in the initial phases of a party’s history and but then become less relevant when a radical right party is able to achieve government responsibility.

3.10 Conclusions

A party’s ideology is often defined by its fundamental principles and medium and long-term effects of policies that are first of all described in official programmes, which are usually released by a party before the elections. Party programmes, or in their absence their nearest equivalent, represent important documents for the statement of a clear party policy, which is backed up by the leadership and sponsored as the party’s official position. The importance and reliability of this kind of literature for the study of party ideology is already well known in the field of party political studies and comparative party politics.³³

Party programmes and manifestos represent the most authoritative and comprehensive reference where party identity is demarcated and wherefrom the party develops issues and principles that will be evaluated and eventually voted on by the electorate. Their orientation is predominantly external, in the sense that their aim is mainly to attract voters and enhance the profile of the party (Mudde 2000). But precisely because of their official function, party programmes are also moderate in tone, coherent and carefully formulated. Particularly in the case of the radical right parties, these characteristics have been considered as the expression of the party’s ‘front-stage’. The ‘front-stage’ conceals other statement declarations, positions and points of view which are initiated by party spokesmen of various kinds and where it is less

³³ This is emphasised by the Manifesto Research Group (MRG), later transformed into the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP). This group has created a party manifesto dataset bringing together data on the content of party manifestoes for most of Western European parties. The method and analysis used by the CMP has been described in the pages above.

clear how far the party as a whole is officially committed to them. These are expressions of the party's 'back-stage'; an ideological realm whose positions are less likely to be openly advertised in official party manifestoes. They find a place in party papers, primarily read by party members, in newsletters, books, articles, interviews and speeches at party meetings.

When a party achieves government responsibility, some of the extreme positions, which might be uttered within the party ranks, are more likely to be filtered out. The leadership is often aware that radical standpoints can be highly damaging to the profile of a party that seeks political influence. The risk is to alienate the more moderate electorate. This does not mean that the party completely avoids some of the extreme ideological positions representing its 'hard-wing'. They can continue to exist within the party, at least until the party leadership is able to control them and eventually take distance from them when necessary and in particular when the party risks being damaged. It could also be argued that the fact that someone in the party still can express radical positions – for example on immigration – allows the party to hold on to voters who would otherwise feel uncomfortable with the more moderate course chosen by the party.

Several analyses on the radical right are based on research of the extreme factions in a party and possible relations with groups uttering racist or undemocratic positions. It is important to reveal the 'back-stage' in order to fully understand the composition of these parties, especially when it comes to radical right parties that still show clear borderline anti-democratic and anti-systemic features, e.g. the Republikaner and NDP in Germany. For a party that has come through different stages of political legitimisation, and which in some cases has openly distance itself from it, the extremism of some of its members can mean little for the position of the party as a whole and also to explain why people vote for it.

Another aspect concerns the relation to the 'taming effect' resulting from the political and government influence achieved by the three parties considered here and the effects on party ideology. In this case it is important to keep in mind the difference between the fundamental and operative dimensions of party ideology quoted above.

To sum up, party ideology can be studied at different levels, and to get a complete picture of the ideological position of a party the best solution is to consider all the different levels of analysis. However, this implies reading a vast and very heterogeneous literature, which, particularly for a comparative study like this, can present several problems as far as availability and organisation of the material. Therefore, this chapter mainly focuses on the analysis of the three case studies by using sources which are defined as the party external literature (Mudde 2000). This primarily consists of party programmes and manifestoes, but also of other forms of party literature, representing the party's official political line. The most important prerequisite is that the publications used to supply party programmes must also represent the official party positions and be addressed to a broader audience than party members, although in most cases the latter are the only readers. Articles, newsletters written by party leadership, interviews, books and party slogans represent other sources of externally oriented literature.

Party programmes are useful to the extent that they indicate the fundamental position of a party on most relevant political issues or domains. But precisely because party programmes and manifestos have to be wide-ranging and clear-cut, they only partly reveal party position and change on different issues. Moreover, it is not certain whether the issues that are most extensively discussed in the party manifestoes are actually those that are most highlighted by the party in its effort to reach out to voters. It is widely known that voters seldom read party programmes to form an opinion of what the party stands for. In view of this, it is useful to use other forms of written sources, perhaps more heterogeneous, but nonetheless used by the party leadership in its effort to reach out to voters.

Less exhaustive but necessary is the analysis of the operative dimension of party ideology. In relation to radical right parties this dimension has until recently been neglected, but this can be explained by the fact that its importance has increased together with the movement of these parties towards the core of the political system. Being at the periphery of the system implies that a party is less constrained by pragmatic and more operative decisions; on the other side mainstream parties can more easily implement politics of containment in relation to the radical right and its politics. Nowadays, the political impact exercised by and on these parties clearly deserves a more in-depth analysis.

4. SUGGESTION OF A LIFESPAN MODEL AND INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PARTY IDEOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This brief chapter refers more explicitly to a party lifespan model to aid the analysis of the direction party ideology has taken over the years, particularly in relation to the different phases of a party 'evolution'. The ideology and politics of a party can of course be influenced by the party's position in the political system. Being at the margins and in opposition gives other possibilities and challenges in terms of the attitudes, beliefs and politics developed than those that emerge from being a party in office. Similarly, the strategies and politics of a party seeking consolidation and eventually political influence differ from those of an established party; in this case, there will be greater focus on making the party appear trustworthy and reliable to the electorate and to other mainstream parties. The future of a party whose emergence was largely based on one issue, let us say anti-immigration or anti-establishment politics, can expectedly be challenged in its efforts to consolidate its position and the electoral support, by the lack of a clear programmatic standpoint on other fields, e.g. economics and welfare issues.

In relation to the three parties considered by this study, it is therefore interesting to look at the way the different phases of their political life have influenced their ideology and politics. In this sense, the fact that all three have experienced the main phases of political emergence, consolidation and political influence offers an appealing comparative background.

Section 4.2 introduces a party lifespan model that will later be referred to in the analysis of party ideology. The remaining chapter serves as an extensive introduction to the party literature in relation to each party case. This descriptive section will give the reader an in-depth overview of the material considered for the analysis of party ideology.

4.2 A lifespan model for the empirical analysis of party ideology

The comparative analysis of ideology of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party is based on three main phases of the parties' evolution, suggesting an indicative lifespan model, which should simplify the 'reading' and emphasize the development of ideology over the years. The three phases considered are: 1) a first breakthrough and formative phase, which covers approximately the period from the early 1980s until the mid-1990s; 2) a consolidation and maturity phase from 1995 until 2000; 3) a third phase of government responsibility and policy impact after 2000-01 which still applies to the Danish and Italian case, but which in the Austrian case ended with the election of 2006. The third phase of government responsibility is considered particularly interesting for this study. However, the division into three periods is essential in order to map the ideological evolution and changes that have given rise to the present ideological configuration. Analysing party ideology in relation to a lifespan model also lets us draw attention on the specific way the three parties have dealt with government responsibility and how this has affected previous positions

on certain issues. This approach is also expected to help indicate to what extent the three parties have developed similar strategies and ideological positions in the course of their life time, for example on the important issue of anti-immigration, which several studies still present as these parties' most effective issue for grievance mobilisation (cf. Ivarsflaten 2008(b)). Other ideological dimensions will also be taken into account and considered in a comparative perspective (see Chapter 2).

The phase of historical breakthrough and formation mentioned above is indicatively referred to the years from the early 1980s until the mid-1990s. In reality, the year of launching varies considerably for the three parties. The Danish People's Party was the last to be formed and was launched as late as 1995, but as we will see the main political actors who started the party had already matured their political experience within the ranks of the Progress Party, which undoubtedly was a major factor in the ideological positioning and agenda making of the Danish People's Party. The historical roots of the Austrian Freedom Party date back to 1955-56, when the League of Independents (*Verband der Unabhängigen*, or VdU), a party including several former Austrian Nazi members, was gradually transformed into the Austrian Freedom Party. However, from 1986 and more precisely under Jörg Haider's leadership the Austrian Freedom Party was completely overhauled and transformed from its liberal position under the former leadership into a full-fledged member of the new radical right. The same can be argued in the case of the Northern League, which saw its beginning in 1982 with the launching of the Lombardy League. The League's real political breakthrough came much later, during the early 1990s, when it won over 20 pct. of the votes in the Italian northern region *Lombardia* and over 14-15 pct. throughout the North at the 1992 election.

However, the three periods are not based on a strict chronological and institutional history. The records on how the three parties crossed the (different) thresholds of declaration and authorization are of course essential moments for these parties' history, but the lifespan model is built on other premises. The three stages relate to the context created by the historical conditions and socio-political circumstances under which the parties emerged and in particular the way they managed to build, develop, transform and adapt to these conditions.

Parties are far from passive suppliers of electoral demand, and there has been too much focus on explaining their breakthrough in relation to electoral demand. If the explanation of electoral success is often a snapshot of a 'status' at that moment, a lifespan approach can unravel some of the dynamics which allowed the 'survival of the fittest' over a longer period of time and here with reference to more than one national context.

The first phase to be explored is the breakthrough and formative phase. At this stage the parties have laid some important ideological bricks upon which their later development will be based; this, independently of how much a party brings along or moves away from this early phase. Changes and permanence in a party's ideology can only be identified by looking into the party's past: what issues and positions characterised the party in the early stage? What did the party emphasise? And how is the specific ideological platform related to the national and

international context of the time? To this purpose, party programmes and manifestoes in particular, but also other sources of official party literature represent helpful available documents for tracking the change. The sources used for each of the parties analysed will be described in more detail below.

The second period of the political life of these parties goes indicatively from the mid 1990s until 2000, which is considered the parties' consolidation and maturity phase. Several radical right parties, starting from the three cases here, were deemed to decline in the 1990s. The general belief was that they would sooner or later disappear from the political landscape, as a consequence of what was considered the high volatility of the radical right vote. Particularly their anti-establishment and protest nature was seen to endanger their political survival. The inconsistency of their political programmes was seen as a disadvantage in the long run, particularly if the party had achieved a certain visibility in parliament.

Reality proved these predictions wrong and several radical right parties in Europe continued to matter in national politics, while their visibility and influence became more obvious. This was also the result of the fact that other issues besides anti-establishment protest became important and immigration was certainly one of these.

Undoubtedly, the increasing relevance the immigration question has gained since the mid 1980s has given radical right parties a new opportunity to survive the troubles arising from decreasing electoral support. This showed the capacity of these parties to take advantage of the opportunity and to develop anti-immigration politics that appealed to the voters. To find a political and ideological platform which is visible, unique, easy to defend and exploit is not an easy task in a political arena where all parties are looking for new developing issues to exploit in order to survive or maximize their electorate. Anti-immigration was one of these.

However, although anti-immigration has undoubtedly represented an important factor for the survival of the radical right, it may not be the only reason that some of these parties not only managed to break through, but even paved their way into government. As suggested by the new cleavage hypothesis, the radical right had 'something to say' on other ideological dimensions. For example, it is hard to believe that a party can be considered eligible for government if it does not take a clear standpoint on economic matters such as the welfare state, taxation and the organization of the public administration.

There is no doubt that symbolic politics play a greater role in contemporary societies than in the past and that immigration has a clear appeal. However, voters are also pragmatic when they decide which party to vote for and they expect to hear something about how their economy will be affected if a party comes into government. Most of the radical right parties are aware of this and the need to formulate a more precise plan becomes even more pressing when the party gets closer to government.

The third phase is that of government influence and government responsibility. As argued by Minkenberg (2001), parliamentary presence does not alone result in policy effects. It is particularly when a radical right party holds office that most of the impact can be registered

at the legislative and executive levels. This is also likely to produce a ‘taming effect’ on radical right ideology. As introduced in Chapter 2, the effect of having or being close to government responsibility (as the Danish People’s Party) can be ‘measured’ on what Seliger calls the operative dimension of a party ideology (see here Chapter 3; cf. Seliger 1970: 326),

when ideology is made to function in the here and now it becomes subject to strains and stresses that endanger its [...] relative consistency. In fulfilling its function of guiding political action, each political belief system is faced with the challenge of change. All such systems must deal with change, attempting either to perpetrate or prevent it. *In this process they are confronted with the challenge of changing themselves*’ (my italics)

Seliger suggested a very interesting analytical perspective on the implications arising when the radical right gets into office. The approach of the scholarly literature is rather to focus on the radical right’s influence on mainstream parties and on government policy. In particular, recent studies have started to look more specifically at the outcomes in government legislation in cases where a radical right party is either a coalition partner or a supporting party. At this level, legislation on immigration matters and more broadly the parliamentary debates leading to this have become subject of intensive ‘fieldwork’. However, this approach does not always make clear where and how the radical right has (re)adapted, changed or turned down fundamental positions in order to be government eligible. Seliger has proposed different scenarios representing how the fundamental and operative ideological dimensions of a party can interact, conflict and be solved (see Seliger 1970: 331-337). This is not necessarily happening at the expenses of the party, as ideological ‘soundness’ is not always and necessarily a positive token, especially in today’s highly dynamic and competitive party political systems. Very much depends on what ideological compensations a party is able to deliver in exchange for a shift of course. The radical right party is again faces a new test: it has to overcome the difficulties of being a political force with government duties and responsibilities, but without losing too much of its identity. This is not an easy task and it can have a great effect on the electoral future of the party.

In relation to the empirical analysis of this chapter, the observation and assessment of the government impact on radical right ideology represents a challenging operation, presenting some problems in terms of how to do it. Unfortunately, the (in fact quite few) empirical examples Seliger (cf. Seliger 1976) uses to explain how the fundamental and operative dimensions interact are of little help, since he derives them from a historically and politically very different landscape.³⁴ Moreover, his theoretical framework is better developed than his empirical analysis. Anyway, Seliger’s bi-dimensional model can be used as a framework in the analysis of how the three parties’ ideological platform has changed in the third phase of their political life, where government responsibility became the new challenging factor. More

³⁴ Seliger’s analysis only considers the effects on the ideology of the individual party and thus fails to mention how his ‘model’ can for instance be affected by the co-optation of similar issue positions by other parties.

specifically, this will be done by comparing the position developed by the three parties on some of the core ideological dimensions in relation to the two previous periods. However, since official party programmes are rather loath to change (particularly in the short term), the analysis often uses other sources, where adjustment of old positions and/or introduction of new can first emerge. Examples are party papers, pamphlets, official party publications and newsletters. The following section presents a more detailed description of the sources and party literature considered in the analysis of the ideology of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party.

4.3 Introduction and description of the party sources for the analysis of party ideology

4.3.1 The Danish People's Party

From its launching in 1995 and until 1997 the only official programme released by the Danish People's Party was a ten point declaration of intent, a short programme of no more than 900 words, which was only meant as a temporary programmatic platform for the initial phase of the party's political life. The work and activities during the first couple of years, among them the administrative elections of 1997, postponed the release of a new party programme which did not come out until September 1997.

The 1997 *Principle Programme*, or policy agenda is therefore the first comprehensive Danish People's Party programme that was in force until September 2001, when the party presented the *Working programme: common values, common responsibilities* just a few months before the elections. The *Working programme* is the party's most comprehensive and detailed ideological platform, and it discusses all issues of relevance in Danish society in detail in relation to the party's political perspective. Since 2001, the Danish People's Party has had both a policy agenda (the first version from 1997 updated in October 2002) and a so-called working programme. The policy agenda summarises the party's most important principles and foundations, which are not subject to change. The working programme – as formulated in the introduction to the latest version – contains 'clearly defined proposals about how to design Danish politics in the immediate future and is therefore the daily tool for the Danish People's Party elected people – whatever these are safeguarding the party's interests in parliament, the European Parliament, and at the regional or municipal level.'³⁵

The 2001 working programme was reviewed in October 2007 in consideration of the fact that 'a long list of the proposals that were formally included in the 2001 working programme have (...) been realised and thus have become legislation or praxis in the country'.

For the period before 1995, the analysis of party ideology also builds upon the programmes released by the Progress Party, in particular the programmes covering the 1980s and early 1990s. The Progress Party was king of 'fostering' a political milieu for the five party

³⁵ See: 'Fælles Værdier – Fælles Ansvar', October 2007 in: http://www.danskfolkeparti.dk/bIndledning_b.asp (last accessed 07-04-2008).

fellows (Pia Kjærsgaard; Poul Nørdgaard; Kristian Thulesen Dahl, Peter Skaarup and Ole Donner) who in 1995 launched the Danish People's Party.

The Danish People's Party was founded with a critical attitude against the past represented by the Progress Party. However, the critique seemed, particularly at the beginning, to be directed more against the way the Progress Party was internally organized and steered, rather than against its ideological positions and foundation. Later, the Danish People's Party broke increasingly free from its past. However, it is very important to look into the ideological background and political formation behind the Danish People's Party leadership. It is still unclear how much the two parties diverged ideologically, particularly in the first years of the Danish People's Party political development.³⁶ From the 1970s to the 1990s, the Progress Party went through significant transformations that changed its profile as a tax protest, neo-liberal and anti-establishment party considerably. More specifically, in the second half of the 1980s, the party began to focus on new issues and develop new programmatic strategies. This was partly a necessary reaction to the declining electoral support in those years. The strategy of ideological readjustment to the new times is to some extent related to the ideological development of the Danish People's Party and cannot be ignored. Therefore its formative phase will initially be considered in relation to the experience matured under the Progress Party, and next we will look at how and to what extent the Danish People's Party left that ideological heritage behind.

Similarly to other radical right parties, but perhaps a little more avant-garde, the Danish People's Party members have been very active in disseminating the party political message. In February 1997, the parliamentary group launched the party paper, *Dansk Folkeblad* (Danish People's paper), which comes out about every second month. From 1997 to 1998 the aim of the paper was to inform and to keep in touch with registered members, who received the party paper by post (*Dansk Folkeblad* 1998/ 3: 15). According to party sources, there were approx. 3500 paying members after the 1998 elections. Copies of the paper were made available to more than 600 libraries (out of approx. 850) nationwide. From 1997-2005, *Dansk Folkeblad* was directed by Søren Espersen, a professional journalist who initially worked with MP Peter Skaarup, a prominent party leader. *Dansk Folkeblad* benefited a lot from Espersen's solid journalistic experience, and he has played an important role in developing the paper, taking care of press relations and launching the party internet site. In 2005, when Espersen was elected to parliament, he was followed by Søren Søndergaard, another experienced journalist.

Dansk Folkeblad is the official paper of the Danish People's Party MPs and even if the frontispiece specifies that 'the articles and contributions included in the paper do not necessarily reflect the party's official position', most of articles are written by party MPs, or at least by

³⁶ Until recently, the scholarly position has tended to accentuate elements of continuity rather of discontinuity between the two parties. Rydgren has quite interestingly questioned this approach, suggesting also that the ideological divergences between the parties can perhaps help to better understand the recent history and success of the Danish People's Party.

a group of people that works closely with the MPs. Pia Kjærsgaard contributes to each issues with a page 3 newsletter (*Nyhedsbrev fra Pia Kjærsgaard*) on topics of current political or public relevance.

Compared to other party papers, *Dansk Folkeblad* has an attractive and colourful layout similar to some gossip magazines. When *Dansk Folkeblad* replaced its original and rather boring black and white layout with a colourful format at the end of 1998, following the strategy of popular dissemination of party politics, the type of articles published also became more diversified, dealing with historical, popular and traditional topics, which do not always have something to do with the politics or organization of the party, but which appealed to national feelings, national identity and memories of Danish costumes, traditions, way of life and typical food. This may have made the party paper a little more interesting than ‘just’ a container of boring political stuff about the party’s parliamentary activity. In this respect, it is interesting how the *Dansk Folkeblad*, besides getting deeper into matters of political interest, has dealt with the private life of party MPs, updating readers about engagements, marriages, births and deaths.

At present, *Dansk Folkeblad* can be found in most Danish public libraries and it is sent to most MPs and journalists (cf. *Dansk Folkeblad* 2005/2). From the end of 1998, the paper became available in a downloadable format on the party homepage. As today it is the case for several radical right parties, the Danish People’s Party homepage is very well organized, although only available in Danish, and hosts most of the party’s relevant documents and information.

The epistolary form is one of Pia Kjaersgaard’s most favourite and direct ways to reach out to people. Besides the newsletter published in *Dansk Folkeblad*, Pia Kjærsgaard writes a weekly newsletter every Monday, *Pia Kjærsgaard’s ugebrev*, which is published on the party’s homepage or alternatively sent via e-mail to all subscribers.

The newsletters mostly deal with the week’s most important political or social event or news and are therefore good indicators of what the party leader thinks and considers important ‘here and now’. Therefore, Pia Kjærsgaard’s letters can give a rather detailed idea about the position of the party on up-to-date issues and also a feeling of the transformations, which might have taken place within the party over time. The letters examined here are written from 2002 to 2005, including a scattered sample from 2000.³⁷

There are other party official publications which are worth considering, since they represent the official position of the party or relevant information about the party history and development. It is the case of the party book on immigration and immigrants, which was widely advertised by the party leadership at the time of publication in May 2001, *Denmark’s Future: Your Land – Your Vote (/Choice)* (Dansk Folkeparti Folketingsgruppe 2001). The book was strategically released just before the November 2001 elections where immigration

³⁷ The party secretary has not answered a mail regarding availability of letters from 2000 and 2001. These years are not available in the archive hosted on the party’s homepage.

was one of the most debated and relevant issues during the electoral campaign. *Denmark's Future* was sent to all party members and it was available in bookstores at a very cheap price. The contents of the book, as we will see later, are important for understanding the party's position on immigration.

4.3.2 The Northern League

The history of the Northern League begins in the 1980s. The phenomenon of regionalist movements was becoming a widespread reality in the Italian political landscape, at first in particular the wealthiest regions of Northern Italy, such as Piedmont, Lombardy, Friuli and Veneto. The main goal of these movements was initially the preservation of the regional language, culture, tradition and folklore, but within a few years it changed to a demand for increasing regional self-government, in particular in terms of economic and fiscal autonomy from Rome. It was this original political objective and spirit that characterised the Lombard League, when it was officially founded under the name of Autonomist Lombard League in April 1984 by Umberto Bossi, the historical leader of the Northern League, together with a few other members.

The movement's first publication was an unpretentious and home-made paper called *Autonomist Lombardy*. It became the platform for the first controversial messages and positions of the ethno regionalist organization, with a distribution limited to the very local level. Since the main subject of this study is the Northern League, very few of the most relevant documents published in *Autonomist Lombardy* from 1982 to 1992 (the year the Lombard League merged with other regional autonomist parties giving rise to the Northern League) will be considered.

The first programme released by the still locally based Lombard League was a twelve point programme written in 1984 entitled 'Overcoming the centralized state'. Together with the articles from *Autonomist Lombardy*, this first official party document represents an important source for understanding the character and first ideological phase of the party.

The 1990s were a turning point for the history of the Northern League, as it will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. It was in the early 1990s that the Italian political party system was shocked by exceptional events; firstly by the consequences of the collapse communist bloc, and secondly and even more dramatically for the country by the result of the investigations into political corruption that involved the leadership of several Italian parties. In this political situation the Northern League delivered a comprehensive ideological and programmatic plan that placed the party as a credible alternative on the political arena. Both the 1994 and 1996 party electoral programmes show a higher level of ideological, political and organizational 'maturity' in relation to the party's recent past.

In 2001, the Northern League (re)joined the centre-right coalition The House of Liberties (*La Casa delle Libertà*) led by Silvio Berlusconi. The Northern League became a party of the centre right coalition in force of the 1993 electoral law, which had established a

(semi)bipolar political system, but which in reality was a mixture between a proportional and a majoritarian system (see e.g. Pasquino 2002: 81-106). However, it was in 2001 that the Northern League made a clear programmatic agreement with the other parts of the coalition,³⁸ which produced the programmatic document called *Pact of the House of Liberties*, signed by all the member parties of the coalition (Forza Italia; National Alliance; CCD-CDU and Northern League). To return to the party sources, this means that since 2001, the position of the Northern League is also represented in the programmatic texts produced by the centre-right coalition.

A significant source for reconstructing the ideological transformations and evolutions undergone by the Northern League is also represented by the books written by party leader Umberto Bossi.³⁹ Contrary to the anti-intellectual and populist image that both he and the media have encouraged, Umberto Bossi has been a rather productive writer, at least until 2004, when serious illness kept him away from politics for more than a year, obliging him to significantly reduce the level of political activity, also after his political comeback. Before that, he managed to write a number of books on the history, programme, experience and vision of the Northern League starting from the party's beginnings until the years of maturity and consolidation of the late 1990s. Bossi was assisted by Daniele Vimercati,⁴⁰ a professional journalist, who had become interested in the Northern League from its beginnings in 1982, when few would have imagined that the local party would achieve such an influential role in the years to come.

During the 1990s, when the party had made a clear breakthrough in Italian politics, other professionals and intellectuals joined the party, developing and improving the party's ideological doctrine. In particular, the project of a federalist reform of the state – with different degrees of autonomy from the centre – which has always a core issue of the Northern League ideology, attracted, particularly in the 1990s, a number of academics and intellectuals, who supported the transformation of the Italian republic into a federal state.⁴¹

The first party paper, *Autonomist Lombardy*, quoted above, changed its name to *Northern League*, a periodical that was published until 1996, when the newspaper *La Padania* became the official press organ, with Umberto Bossi as political director. The publication of the party newspaper takes place in a difficult period for the Northern League. At the end of 1994, the party had in fact broken with the Berlusconi government, provoking a crisis that led to new parliamentary elections. The party political project to separate the North from the rest of Italy and to create an independent Padanian state was received with some scepticism by parts

³⁸ In 1994, the Northern League had made a separate agreement with Forza Italia for the North of Italy, since the party rejected any possibility to come together with what Bossi called the 'fascists' leading National Alliance. In 1996 the party ran alone the parliamentary elections.

³⁹ For a list of these books see the bibliography.

⁴⁰ D. Vimercati has co-authored most of the books written by Umberto Bossi.

⁴¹ One of the relevant intellectuals joining the party at the beginning of the 1990s was Gianfranco Miglio, an academic and professor of law, who was elected to the Senate (Upper House) as an independent on the Northern League's list.

of the party electorate. The needs to re-establish direct contact with the electoral base and to keep the party as a visible alternative in the political scenario were certainly some of the reasons for launching a new communication strategy including the daily *La Padania*.

In addition to the party literature mentioned above, other forms of publications have been considered. An example is the party leaflet *Lega Flash*, initially released only at the regional level, but now downloadable directly from the party homepage (www.leganord.org), which deals very concisely with some of the most relevant issues such as immigration, crime, taxes and so forth. After the entrance into government in 2001 and until its end in 2006, the Northern League has also released the information paper *Here League (Qui Lega)*,⁴² reporting on parliamentary activity and in particular about the laws proposed and discussed by the government.

4.3.3 The Austrian Freedom Party

The analysis of the Austrian Freedom Party ideology is based on a number of official party programmes covering the period from approximately 1985 until about 2006. This time span and the related documents analysed give the opportunity to consider the party ideology at different stages. However, mainly for limited time and resources, the amount and variety of the FPÖ official party documents available are less comprehensive than for the other two cases.

In 1985, the Austrian Freedom Party was still under the leadership of Norbert Steiger (1980-1986), who had launched a liberalist and compromise-seeking course. From 1983 until 1986, the party had experienced a brief government responsibility in the ‘small’ coalition with the Social Democratic Party. The first FPÖ official party programme considered is from 1985, just before Jörg Haider became party leader in 1986. It remained the official programme until 1994, when a brief programmatic document entitled ‘Theses for a political renewal of Austria’ upgraded the ideological platform of the party. It was as late as 1997 that the party released a new official programme.

The writing of a new programme had been in progress since 1995, but was interrupted by the unexpected general election. As indicated by Sully (1997: 53), the 1997 programme was prepared by an inner circle of party intellectuals, among them Ewald Stadler, an Austrian politician with strong nationalist and militant Catholic views. The approval of the new programme and particularly the emphasis on certain issues encountered some difficulties and further postponed the publication to October 1997 (cf. Sully 1997: 55-56).

Within the period 1985-1997, however, the FPÖ released a number of other official documents, for example the so-called ‘Contract with Austria’ (*20 punkte für den Vortrag mit Österreich*) of 1995, in which the FPÖ criticised the status of democracy in Austria and sug-

⁴² The weekly *Here League* covers the period from 2001 until 2006 and can be downloaded from the Northern League’s homepage. As observed in the case of the Danish People’s Party, the League’s internet site is full of political documents, articles and references, but it is not as well updated and structured.

gested the beginning of a new era (or a Third Republic), where citizens could really express their will.

The FPÖ's years in government will be examined on the basis of a number of relevant electoral programmes and documents published after 2000. FPÖ's entrance into office together with the ÖVP was opened by the government declaration of February 2000, where the Chancellor Wolfgang Schlüssel explained the vision of the new government. It is a significant document because it was written under the pressure of the diplomatic sanctions imposed by the other EU countries and by a general climax of political scepticism of FPÖ's role in government.

For the anticipated election of November 2002, the party released the electoral campaign programme 'Social and fair' (*Sozial & Gerecht Lebenswert & Leisbar. Zukunftsorientiert und Modern. Wir gestalten Österreich mit Sicherheit*). In the same years, the FPÖ was experiencing a deep internal crisis and the party leadership was aware that the electoral result would not be as in 1999.

The new phase after the electoral decline in 2002 and Jörg Haider's exit in 2005 will be considered through the 'Handbook of FPÖ politics' (*Handbuch freiheitlicher Politik*) and the FPÖ electoral programme presented at the 2006 parliamentary election.

The following Chapters 5, 6, 7 are dedicated to the empirical analysis of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party ideology. Each chapter deals with one party at time, as it was difficult to contain the comparative analysis of the three parties in a single chapter. However, several comparative reflections are included in the course of the analysis.

Chapters 8 and 9 shall deal respectively with the comparative analysis of the voters' social profile and attitudes. The electorate is studied in close relationship to the dimensions that emerged from the analysis of the 'supply side' in order to see how the two interact and explain each other.

PART II

THE SUPPLY SIDE: PARTIES AND IDEOLOGY

5. THE DANISH PEOPLE'S PARTY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse how the ideology of the Danish People's Party has developed and changed over time and in relation to the different phases of the party lifecycle. To get a clear picture of the party's emergence, history and ideological development, the analysis also refers to the experience of the Progress Party, which in many respects can be considered the forerunner of the Danish People's Party, but from which the new party wanted to emancipate itself both ideologically and organizationally. This produced elements of continuity and discontinuity between the two parties, which deserve to be more closely investigated. The ideological development of the Danish People's Party is then considered in relation to the main dimensions traced in Chapter 3 above, which also refer to the three hypotheses about new political cleavages, marginalisation and anti-establishment politics.

5.1 HISTORY

5.1.1 Historical overview and electoral development: from the Progress Party to the Danish People's Party

Any study of the Danish People's Party ignoring the history of what happened before 1995, gives an imperfect image of what the party is today and how it has developed over time. More specifically, any attempt to understand the Danish People's Party cannot avoid considering the experience the party's leadership gained in the ranks of the Progress Party in the 1980s and until the beginning of the 1990s.

To evaluate the past in relation to the present is therefore still an important task, precisely because it also helps to track some clearer lines of the ideological evolution and changes between the Danish People's Party and the Progress Party. This allows us to consider what drained the experience and appeal of the Progress Party, which in 2005 disappeared forever from the Danish political scene, leaving the Danish People's Party as the only radical right party of significance in the Scandinavian country.

5.1.2 The Progress Party (1973-2001)

The Progress Party started as a populist, ultra-liberal and anti-tax party (see Bjørklund & Goul Andersen 2009). In 1973, the Progress Party won a landslide victory with almost 16 pct. of the electoral support and 28 seats in parliament (cf. Table 1.5, Chapter 1). In Danish books

this election is described as the ‘Earthquake election’ (*Jordskredsvalget*), primarily because five new parties entered parliament, radically transforming the Danish party system.⁴³

The Danish electorate expressed discontent with the mainstream parties and wanted a new course in Danish politics. Although the party never managed to repeat the result in following elections, it was able to get more than 10 pct. of the votes until at least the beginning of the 1980s, showing that it was more than a flash party. The Progress Party was in many respects a political formation out of the ordinary, starting from its leader, Mogens Glistrup, whose entrance in politics did not follow a conventional path (see also Robdrup 1977). Until 1971, Glistrup was only known as a tax lawyer. His popularity came after an interview to the Danish national television in 1971, in which he provocatively declared in front of the audience that he did not pay taxes to the Danish state and that this was – in his view – a legitimate duty for every Danish taxpayer. Glistrup later compared it to the courageous railway sabotages by the Danish resistance movement against the Germans occupiers in WWII.

Later, Glistrup formed and launched the Progress Party, which he initially presented as a popular movement,⁴⁴ different from the other conventional party organizations and himself as a sort of spiritual guide, rather than a conventional party leader. In the 1970s and early 1980s the Progress Party played the role of a protest, anti-establishment and anti-tax party and these characteristics made it very similar to other protest and anti-tax parties in Europe of which the Poujadist movement in France had represented the political avant-garde. However, at the beginning of the 1980s, the exclusive role of the Progress Party as a neo-liberal forerunner with tax protest on the agenda seemed to have reached an end. During the 1980s, the neo-conservative wave from Britain and the US was revived by the Thatcher and Reagan administrations. Here, liberal economic arguments for the free market, individual enterprise and a reduced public sector were justified in terms of social and moral conservative principles (see King 1987). In 1982, the leader of the Danish Conservative Party, Poul Schlüter, formed a centre-right government coalition⁴⁵ with the Progress Party and the moderate Social Liberals as parliamentary guarantors. In line with the neo-liberalist economic philosophy, the government cut back public expenses and retrenched the welfare state. This drained interest in the Progress Party’s main issues, which aimed at abolishing income taxes, abandoning public regulation and welfare and tidying up the public sector (see Fremskridtsparti 1973; Andersen, 1992; Glans, 1984).

In the late 1980s and 1990s, the party’s internal division between the ‘slackers’ and the ‘hardliners’ became more profound. After Glistrup’s exit in 1990, Pia Kjærsgaard invited all the voters who had previously stated that ‘they were only waiting for Mogens Glistrup’s exit’

⁴³ Besides the Progress Party, also the Centre Democrats, the Christian People’s Party, the Left Socialists (Venstresocialister) and the Danish Communist Party entered parliament. None of them are represented in Parliament now.

⁴⁴ The Progress Party was founded at a press conference at the restaurant *Grøften* in Tivoli in the midst of the debate on the European Market (EF), as a popular movement against the rule of public officials.

⁴⁵ The coalition governed from 1982 until 1988 and included the Conservative Party (K), the Liberal Party (V), the Christian People’s Party (KrF) and the Centre Democrats (CD).

to join the party (see Fremskridtsparti 1990: 4). But the party internal conflicts continued and in 1995 Pia Kjærsgaard decided to leave. At the 1998 elections, the Progress Party barely cleared the threshold of 2 pct. and managed to remain in parliament. At the same elections, the Danish People's Party at its first parliamentary election got more than 7 pct. of the votes. In 2000, the Progress Party readmitted Mogens Glistrup. Quite symbolically, Glistrup, who had founded the party three decades before, managed to be there to see its end. In 2001, the Progress Party got only 0.4 pct. of the votes and disappeared from Danish politics, while the Danish People's Party successfully entered mainstream politics.

5.1.3 The Danish People's Party (1995-2008)

The Danish People's Party was officially launched on October 4 1995 by the party leader Pia Kjærsgaard together with Poul Noerregaard, Ole Donner, Kristian Thulesen Dahl and Peter Skaarup.⁴⁶ All the DF founders had been former MPs and members of the Progress Party.⁴⁷

The exit of the five members from the party group in 1995 has often been explained as the result of a power struggle between two factions within the Progress Party (cf. Ringsmose 2003), the so-called 'hard-liners' (*strammerne*) and the 'slackers' (*slapperne*), that had troubled the party since the 1980s and was based on two different views on what political strategy to adopt in relation to government politics. While the hard-liners supported an either/or political line and were against the politics of compromise, the slackers wanted an influence-seeking political strategy that supported the politics of the bourgeois parties in government to gain more political influence. Pia Kjærsgaard was among these.

Kjærsgaard had joined the Progress Party in 1978 at the age of 31. In 1984 she was voted into parliament and chosen as temporary substitute to the leader Mogens Glistrup, while he was in prison for tax fraud, for which he had been convicted in 1983. Pia Kjærsgaard had no previous experience with politics. She has often made this a point of force of her biography, emphasising her popular origins and life pragmatism in contrast with the academic professionalism of most politicians in Danish politics. As she directly put it once: 'I am not a political scientist, but a home helper (*hjemmehjaelper*). Some may look down on this, but I am proud of it', adding polemically that other politicians have certainly never experienced the need 'to turn old people in their beds in the middle of the night', something that, as she maintained, contributed to make her 'soft-hearted on social issues (Kjærsgaard in Politiken 19-10-1997).

With the help of the moderate wing of the Progress Party and in particular with the political support of Helge Dohrmann, leader of the Progress Party's parliamentary group, Pia Kjærsgaard worked during the 1980s to stop the party's electoral decline. The party leader-

⁴⁶ The latter two are today the most prominent politicians in the Danish People's Party, after the undisputed leader Pia Kjærsgaard.

⁴⁷ Four of them (Kjærsgaard, Noerregaard, Thulesen Dahl and Donner) were until 1995 Progress Party MPs, while Peter Skaarup was until 1994 responsible for the Progress Party secretariat.

ship worked to promote the Progress Party as a trustworthy political party and a credible partner for parliamentary coalitions.

Kjærsgaard was a crucial actor in the game for the leadership in the Progress Party. Her decision to quit the party is therefore often related to her failing to reach power by placing her people in the vacant organisational posts. This interpretation is important to keep in mind since it supports a reading that sees more ideological continuity than fracture between the Progress Party and the Danish People's Party. This reading has until recently been supported by much of the scholarly literature on the party (e.g. Bjørklund & Goul Andersen 2000; Pedersen & Ringsmose 2005). Recently, other scholars have instead maintained that there is greater discontinuity between the two parties than so far claimed (cf. Rydgren 2004: 474). However, neither side has really substantiated their positions with a comprehensive comparative analysis of the two parties' ideology.

The position indicating a close ideological affinity between the Danish People's Party and the Progress Party seemed initially confirmed by former Progress Party voters who switched to the Danish People's Party when it was launched in the 1990s. Among those who in 1994 had cast their vote for the Progress Party, about half declared they would vote for the Danish People's Party in 1998.

However, it is also a fact that the creation of the Danish People's Party offered the unique opportunity to the newly formed political actor to reconsider and revise the party's foundation and principles and to work on a more original ideological platform for the Danish People's Party. And, as we will see, the founders of the Danish People's Party did not leave this opportunity untried.

The beginnings were particularly difficult for the newly formed political organisation. The press was quite unanimous and predicted a short life for the new party. The popular Danish tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* ran an article entitled 'Farewell Mrs. Kjærsgaard' (*Ekstra Bladet* 10-1995) considering her political future on the right wing of Danish parliamentary politics definitively closed. But the party managed very well already from the start. Only a few months after the launching, the Danish People's Party had collected the 21,000 signatures necessary to register on the list of parties running for the upcoming parliamentary election. The party soon had a significant number of members, which increased with time. In 1997 the DF counted about 1500 members (see *Dansk Folkeblad* 1997:3), which at the beginning of 1998 had passed 2500 (in *Dansk Folkeblad* 1998:1) and reached 5000 in 2000 (*Dansk Folkeblad* 2000:1). At present the party membership is reported at about 10,000 (*Dansk Folkeblad* 2009/1: 32).

At the first municipal elections in 1997 about 7 pct. voted for the party.⁴⁸ It was a positive result, considering that the party was only about a year old and its programme consisted of a very concise declaration of intents. However, the clear electoral breakthrough came at the

⁴⁸ Already at the municipal elections, the Danish People's Party did particularly well in traditional 'left wing' municipalities, becoming a potential rival for the Social Democratic Party (see Nielsen 1997).

1998 parliamentary election, where the Danish People's Party was able to confirm the 7 pct. and gained thirteen seats in parliament (cf. Table 1.5, Chapter 1). The positive electoral support gave the party a rather solid parliamentary representation that needed to be consolidated.

Since its formation, the Danish People's Party worked to get electoral support and political influence, aware of the fact that this would require compromises with the other parties. Already in the 1996 declaration of intents it was stated that the aim of the Danish People's Party was: 'to give the Danish voters a real alternative to the politics pursued by the existing political parties' but also that such an alternative 'can play an active role in the parliamentary life' reaching 'political results through collaboration with other parties [because] a political party must never be a goal in itself. (...) The Danish People's Party therefore sees as its goal to realise as much of the party's politics as possible' (Dansk Folkeparti 1996).

The pursuit of order and unity within the party's own ranks was a first and necessary step to achieve the necessary political reliability that helped the party forward in the process of 'normalisation' and achievement of political responsibility. One of the first tasks was for example to release the party from the negative image built by the Progress Party in the 1990s and often associated with anarchic situations, internal conflicts and political unreliability. To promote the Danish People's Party as a politically credible alternative, the party leadership (and in particular Pia Kjærsgaard) made clear from the beginning that the party leadership would not tolerate internal conflicts and disagreements with the strategy. In a newsletter entitled 'Control from the top? Yes, of course' (*Topstyring? – Ja, naturligvis*), Pia Kjærsgaard explained that a highly centralised party leadership was necessary to prevent the chaotic situations experienced in the years of the Progress Party, for as she said:

when I launched the Danish People's Party together with other MPs, I swore that I never ever, as long as I was party leader, would let something happen that was even slightly reminiscent of the anarchic situation we were coming from' (Pia Kjærsgaard in Dansk Folkeblad 2000/2: 3).

This was pursued with determination and has excluded numerous party members who disagreed with the leadership or whose standpoints were considered extreme or inappropriate for the party.

At the November 2001 elections, the Danish People's Party got 13 pct. of the votes and 22 parliamentary seats, nine more than in 1998. It was after these elections that the bourgeoisie parties decided to benefit from the support of the Danish People's Party. From 2001 the party became the key partner of the Liberal-Conservative coalition in office. The newly formed government lacked some of the necessary mandates to get the majority of the seats (90) in the Danish Parliament. This meant that the two parties had to count on the support of a party outside the governing coalition, to be able to pass the government politics. The Danish People's Party was from the start the favoured candidate, since the party had clearly stated its support to the Liberal candidate Anders Fogh Rasmussen during the electoral campaign.

In this scenario, the government parties contributed to the political legitimisation of the Danish People's Party, putting an end to a situation in which the votes to the radical right were in effect wasted (cf. Bale 2003). At the same time the coalition at government could adopt some of the 'winning' issues of the Danish People's Party (for example on immigration, law and order and welfare abuses) responding to the Danish voters' concerns about the immigration.

The official position of government support partner in 2001 implied a more active and direct engagement of the party in the decision and policy making process and the unprecedented opportunity to exert relevant political influence on several social and economic domains in Danish society. The opposition defined the new government configuration as 'block politics' (*blokkpolitik*). The definition refers to the preferential decisional pattern consisting almost exclusively of agreements made between the Liberal-Conservative government and the Danish People's Party. From the opposite side, the Danish People's Party replied by calling the government resulting from the 2001 parliamentary elections a 'system change' (*systemskifte*); a change that according to the party has to be interpreted as a popular revolt against the dominant cultural paradigm imposed by the political and intellectual left wing elite (cf. Krarup 2006).

In 2001, the Danish People's Party thus gained a particularly favourable and influential position, which gave the party the chance to work more concretely and operatively on the decisional process and on policy making. From 2001, the Danish People's Party took part in nearly all broad agreements on labour market reforms, welfare reforms, reforms of the public administration and worked together with the government parties to approve all annual budget negotiations starting from 2002. Most significantly, the Danish People's Party had a crucial role in writing the rules and conditions for immigration in the immigration law approved with the government in May 2002. Also in foreign politics was the support of the Danish People's Party essential for the Danish military participation in Afghanistan and in Iraq in 2003. The only exception was on European politics, where the Danish People's Party has remained sceptical towards further integration, which, in the view of the party, would undermine the national sovereignty.

The participation in major reforms and political agreements is now used strategically by the leadership to attest the influential role and reliability of the Danish People's Party in Danish politics. Already in 2002, Pia Kjaersgaard started to emphasise the concrete results obtained with the support of the Danish People's Party:

The Danish People's Party now runs all-round politics. We cannot be brushed aside as a single-issue party; we are now a government leading party, which is helping to secure the welfare state and is not afraid to carry out the necessary reforms of the Danish society (...) the Danish People's Party has placed itself at the centre of Danish politics' (Pia Kjaersgaard ugebrev 11-02-2002; see also ugebrev 04-03-2002).

In 2001 and the following two legislations, the votes of the Danish People's Party secured the Liberal and Conservative government the necessary support. This has given the Danish People's Party an influential status and the opportunity to exert important pressure on the government parties to carry out as much of the party's politics as possible. The role of support that the DF has occupied until now has allowed the party distance itself from positions in direct contrast with the politics supported by the party; an example is clearly EU politics. It is a 'preferential' position, whose advantages are clear to the party leadership. As Peter Skaarup answered in a recent interview to the question whether the party has developed ambitions to come into office (Skaarup in Berlingske Tidende 03-05-2009):

A party does not have to get into government, if it has no interest in this. If this does not reward the interests that the party and the party voters have. If a party has to get into government it must be because it wants to achieve a stronger position and influence. After the last election we decided that we were not interested in this; however this may change after the next election or the next election again.

In this sense, the fact that the party has not yet been offered any ministerial positions and even more significantly, the fact that the DF has never advanced such a demand since 2001 is the result of a strategy that has given the party some advantages, perhaps more than could have reached by being in government. This must not be forgotten in the following sections on the ideology of the party.

5.2 NEO-LIBERALISM AND TAXES

5.2.1 *The Progress Party of the beginnings: neo-liberalism and tax protest.*

According to the populist hypothesis (see here Chapter 2), radical right parties are often also tax protest movements. Tax protest is part of their anti-establishment stance, as paying taxes is considered a way to maintain the public sector, which is considered costly and unproductive. Therefore, a common demand is to strongly downsize the public spending and to privilege investments from the public sector. As we have seen in Chapter 2, independently from the approach used to explain the radical right, most of the scholarly literature suggested that a clear neo-liberal orientation on the economic dimension represents one of the essential components in the so-called radical right winning formula (cf. Kitschelt 1995).

The tax protest and neo-liberal interpretation fits very well in the case of the Progress Party, whose political beginnings in the 1970s were clearly made under the ideological banner of anti-tax politics and a neo-liberal position translated into the demand for less state intervention and more privatization and liberalisation of the national economy. The party's main goal was complete abolishment of income tax, something the party considered achievable in maximum seven years and which should have started by progressively increasing the amount of the non-taxable basic income (cf. Fremskridtsparti 1973: 7).

In the first programmes of the Progress Party, the abolishment of all income taxes is described as a necessary reform to solve a number of major national economic problems, such as unemployment, inflation and the financing of welfare. In the party documents of those years, these problems are portrayed as the result of the unbearable tax pressure on the Danish tax payers. According to the party, this only slowed down private investments and damaged individual initiative and creativity.

During the 1980s, the Progress Party began to moderate the anti-tax profile and the party demands changed from unconditioned income tax abolition into a more pragmatic claim for a higher minimum non-taxable income. However, even if tax-protest was one of the main issues on the agenda particularly during the first decade, the party was not a strictly Poujadist variant of the radical right. Its neo-liberalism was not unconditional and the party also focused on social issues like economic and living conditions of the underprivileged in Danish society (Goul Andersen 2007). The party favoured higher minimum pensions, better hospices for the old and a general improvement of the health system (including the preservation of small hospitals, free medicine, and reduction of patient waiting lists for special health treatments) and a publicly financed educational system (see e.g. Fremskridtsparti 1980: 7 and Fremskridtsparti 1989: 17). This aspect is seldom emphasised in connection with the Progress Party, but it actually represents the first step towards the development of the pro-welfare politics for underprivileged Danish citizens (pensioners, sick, handicapped, homeless) that would later characterise its politics. In this sense, it can be argued that some of the elements of the pro-welfare position developed by the Danish People's Party were also expressed by the Progress Party.

5.2.2 The Danish People's Party and the tax issue

Ideological elements reminiscent of the Progress Party's position on economic issues can still be traced in the Danish People's Party first party programmes. The shift towards pro-welfare politics took place slowly, even if the purpose to leave the neo-liberal and tax protest legacies behind emerged rather early in the history of the Danish People's Party. The intention to promote a pro-welfare and a more social-liberal profile was apparently influenced by the success of the Norwegian Progress Party at the 1997 election. The Norwegian Progress Party, founded in 1973 by Anders Lange, had been inspired by the Danish Progress Party.⁴⁹ In 1997, the party under the leadership of Carl I. Hagen got over 15 pct. of the votes and became the second political force in the country (cf. Aardal 2007). This happened also thanks to an agenda that had focussed on issues such as elder care, hospitals and the quality of the health care system. In that year, the interest in welfare issues prevailed over the immigration question among

⁴⁹ However, during most of the two parties' lifetime, there was little or no direct contact between the Danish and Norwegian party. The Norwegian party preferred to avoid close formal relations with the leader of the Danish Progress Party, Mogens Glistrup, considering his position democratically dubious. Also relations with the Danish People's Party were until recently very limited. But in recent times, the present leader of the Norwegian party, Siv Jensen, declared that DF's politics in Denmark represent a model to follow in Norway, particularly the Danish immigration regime.

the party's voters (cf. Bjørklund 1998). Pia Kjærsgaard could therefore see how a pro-welfare agenda had a better electoral appeal than neo-liberal and low tax positions defending the interests of the strong. The electoral appeal was also stronger when welfare was coupled to other issues such as law and order and anti-immigration. As she declared in 1997:

When we founded the Danish People's Party (...), we made away with the Progress Party specifically in that field [no taxes]. The Progress Party was in the 1970s related to no-taxes and cleaning up the public sector. This is a bad image. The Progress Party in Norway has always been cleverer than the Danish party. Carl I. Hagen [leader of the Norwegian Progress Party from 1978 until 2006] won (at the 1997 elections) precisely emphasising the lack of welfare during the electoral campaign. I do not mind [the Danish People's Party] leaning toward [this strategy] (quoted in Politiken 19/10/97).

Presenting the party programme in 1997, Pia Kjærsgaard emphasised that the Danish People's Party was born as a 'red and white party – a Danish party'. Concretely, this meant that the party had given up 'ultra-liberal ideas about the right of the strongest, (...) silly ideas about 0 taxes', 'automatic phone machines saying in Russian we surrender' and 'all that meant to let everything be ruled by profit making'. The party warned against 'ideas of opening the national borders wide' and against 'the complete capitulation to Europe's United States (...) with deadly and naïve dreams about a multi-ethnic society' (Pia Kjærsgaard in Dansk Folkeblad 1997/5: 3).

In reality, in 1997 the Danish People's Party still owed an ideological debt to the neo-liberal and tax reduction positions developed in the past by the Progress Party. Taxes were still a relevant voice in the policy agenda of 1997, where the party asked for a 'strong reduction of taxes combined with rationalisation and reduction of expenses in the public administration and abolition of tax deductions'. In particular, the party demanded 'higher levels of non-taxable income' and asked to apply a fiscal withdrawal not exceeding 30 pct.

A tax reform was still considered necessary to revive private investments and activity and to give the economy and the market the right conditions for 'fair and free trade, where the demand of the market can self regulate the supply', in order to produce so much that 'there is welfare for all' (Dansk Folkeparti 1997: 24). For this reason, the 1997 policy agenda suggested to abolish a number of taxes and expenses considered to slow down the private companies' competitive power, such as direct taxation on companies (*selskabsskatten*) and other forms of indirect costs (Dansk Folkeparti 1997: 22).

At the same time, the party demanded a significant cutback in the costs of the public administration by means of a generalized economisation, rationalisation and privatisation of a consistent number of public services and tasks. Some sectors are specifically mentioned as fields where it is necessary to implement economic cutbacks: immigration; culture; international military activities; public support to political parties; social benefits (*overførselindkomster*) and economic aid to underdeveloped countries (Dansk Folkeparti 1997: 24).

The economic strategy in the 1997 policy agenda was blatantly defined by the Ministry of Finance as unrealistic, since the demand for tax reductions would not allow public finances to cover the increasing public expenditure planned for health care, education and improvements in the nursing sector. Some of the articles published at that time did not hesitate to consider this programmatic imprecision a sign of the party's complete inexperience in the economic field (cf. in Jyllands Posten 19-10-1997).

In ideological terms this was perhaps also a sign that the party was in a transitional phase, where the attempt to position itself as more pro-welfare ran against the attempt to preserve the neo-liberal and tax protest mindset inherited from the past.

Meanwhile, it became clear to the party leadership that it was not possible to hold both positions without losing political credibility and electoral support. The political consolidation of the party required careful reconsiderations of the positions related to economics and tax politics. Significantly in this respect is the 2001 policy agenda, in which the working guidelines for economy, taxes and welfare are much more pragmatically formulated and concrete in scope. For example, it is clearly stated that 'the Danish People's Party wishes a renewal of several Danish social conditions', but also that the party will give its parliamentary support to 'changes which are fully considered and carefully planned and which do not jeopardise the national economic stability' (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001). Correspondingly, the position of the party on taxes in 2001 is that:

it is senseless to speak about reducing taxes, without making clear which public expenses are going to be diminished, or what effect one wants to achieve. The Danish People's Party will work for a gradual lowering of the tax burden to a level corresponding to the average in those countries [Denmark] compares itself to.

Furthermore, it is specified that the party 'is against any form of tax reduction that can deteriorate the basic welfare conditions of fields such as the elder care, pensions, health care, education, research and security' (Dansk Folkeparti 2001).

In the updated working programme of October 2007 (cf. Dansk Folkeparti 2008), the party makes even clearer that fiscal policy represents the necessary frame for the development of society and for a sound redistribution of the national wealth. A central role is given to tax policy, where the party carefully explains how a higher taxation of the top incomes is necessary to finance welfare benefits and services for socially and economically needy citizens. According to the party, the existing level of taxation is therefore necessary in order to support the system of cohesion and solidarity which characterises Danish society. In this sense, the party has today become very careful when dealing with possible reforms of the tax system, as the quotation below demonstrates:

In general the Danish People's Party is in favour of adjusting Danish tax policy if this takes place slowly and respects the welfare state that is financed without putting pressure on the debt. Tax policy is an important instrument in forming the welfare state, which influences the life of

everybody. It is therefore important that tax policy is always perceived as just, effective and fair (Dansk Folkeparti 2007).

Since 2001 the party has supported the government's tax stop, also in periods when this measure seemed to be problematic in terms of maintaining the same levels of welfare.

In the 2007 working programme, the party took a pragmatic position on this, safeguarding the position as guarantor of the welfare state by stating that: 'the effects of the tax stop on distributional policy and on the organisation of the welfare state are going to be under continuous assessment'. It is not surprising that the Danish People's Party emphasises its role as welfare guarantor within the Liberal-Conservative government:

Since the government change in 2001, the Danish People's Party has worked to reinforce (*opruste*) the public sector, for example with the improvement of the health system and elder care system and with the support to the judicial system by adding extra policemen and more prisons. The Danish People's Party will also in the future highly prioritize the improvement of the elder care sector, health care, the judicial system and the police, and the conditions of those who are doing less well in society (Dansk Folkeparti 2007)

In 2007 the Danish People's Party completed the ideological shift started in 1995 and today it works to consolidate its pro-welfare profile. This does not mean that in the practice the party has always and consequently supported welfare politics. But certainly, under a Liberal-Conservative government, its position on welfare matters has often emerged with more intensity, even if the outcome was limited in terms of policy decisions.

However, the welfare state 'as such' is no longer questioned by the Danish People's Party. The focus is rather on who is actually entitled to its benefits. This has meant a demand for increasing restrictions against those who are considered undeserving recipients of welfare benefits, primarily immigrants and refugees. The limits are not only based on the economic factor (how much people have contributed to finance the welfare), but increasingly on questions of social, cultural and value assimilation of the different.

5.3 WELFARE

5.3.1 *A break with the past: the Danish People's Party pro-welfare position*

Since the start in 1995, the party's leadership has focussed on a few specific issues. This helped the party to promote a clear ideological profile and to acquire a kind of ownership status on some issues, in particular anti-immigration, law and order and EU scepticism.

The same issues characterize other radical right wing and populist parties in Western Europe. However, to understand the Danish People's Party's ideology and how it has developed and changed through the years, it is important to consider different dimensions and to consider how they relate to each other. In this respect, the economic dimension has often been underestimated in relation to the study of the radical right parties' ideology. This is even more

evident in the case of the Danish People's Party, as the development of a more pro-welfare orientation represented a clear break with the politics supported by the Progress Party.

The Danish People's Party today has a pro-welfare oriented profile. On welfare issues the party is considered to challenge the traditional domain of the Danish Social Democratic Party. Since the Danish People's Party was launched in 1995, its politics on economic matters have become much more supportive of welfare policy.

Undoubtedly, the development in this direction was influenced by the fact that the DPP voters showed to be among the most supportive for 'classic' welfare arrangements than the electorate of other parties and in particular of the mainstream right (see Goul Andersen 2006). This has to be considered in relation to the socioeconomic profile of the party's electorate with a clear overrepresentation of working class voters (see Chapter 8). This has made the DF a clear working class party in Danish politics today. And this composition has certainly also affected its policies on welfare issues.

However, the pro-welfare orientation came gradually. While during the first years the party carefully promoted limited forms of welfare, today the party leadership intentionally promotes itself as the carrier of the classical Social Democratic welfare tradition. Thus, at the Danish People's Party annual meeting in 2000, Kristian Thulesen Dahl, prominent member and the man who will likely lead the party after Pia Kjaersgaard, declared that:

The Social Democratic Party has already forgotten its old trade mark: security and welfare, so we can also take over the rose [symbol of the Social Democratic Party, redesigned in 2000]. But it must be the real product and not the one which today has been computer designed (Dansk Folkeblad 2000/5: 10).

This role was acknowledged with even more resolution at the party's annual meeting in 2006, when Pia Kjaersgaard declared that 'a real Social Democrat votes for the Danish People's Party' (Pia Kjaersgaard in Dansk Folkeblad 2006/5:4-5)⁵⁰. The statement indicates a radical change of course from the ultra-liberal and anti-tax orientation which characterised the Progress Party. The Progress Party moderated its initial position as a zero-tax party over the years, but tax protest, the critique of the welfare state and the demand cutbacks in public spending remained at the core of the party politics also in the 1980s and 1990s.

The formation of the Danish People's Party in 1995 offered the unprecedented opportunity to abandon the neo-liberal legacies and the tax protest profile, choosing instead a development towards pro-welfare politics.

In the first ten point programme, the Danish People's Party asked for 'protection of the old and the sick' and for improvement of the economy and quality of life of the economically and socially disadvantaged in Danish society. These demands included more money for pensioners and a better service quality in the health system and in the elderly nursing sector. Education and schooling were also mentioned as sectors in need of more economic support, whereas

⁵⁰ And recently by Pia Kjaersgaard also at the September 2009 party meeting.

the rest of the public sector was expected to shrink both in economic and bureaucratic/administrative terms. However, as observed above, before the Danish People's Party also the Progress Party had advanced demands for the improvement of the economy of the same exposed social groups. In particular the conditions of retirees living with minimum pension were often discussed by the Progress Party and by Pia Kjærsgaard when she was in the party (cf. Kjærsgaard in Jyllands Posten 24-01-1992). But in 1997, the Danish People's Party expressed its political engagement for the socially and economically disadvantaged groups in a louder tone. As Pia Kjærsgaard uttered in one of her newsletters:

We have a responsibility for the weak in our society (...) social responsibility is going to be one of the main issues for the Danish People's Party. We will send a clear signal that we are responsible for the weak groups in society. (...) we will not save a single penny when it is necessary to help those citizens who cannot help themselves. (...) we are in many, many situations ready to increase public expenditure for the weakest (Dansk Folkeblad 1997/2: 3).

In the 1997 policy agenda, this commitment was officially repeated in the introductory words, where welfare is described as the natural responsibility that in the Danish community the 'strong feel to take care of the weak' (Dansk Folkeparti Principprogram 1997:3). The elderly, early retirees, sick and handicapped are mentioned among the groups which are most in need (Dansk Folkeparti Principprogram 1997: 10-11).

But welfare benefits are not considered accessible to all. There is an essential difference between the welfare supported by the Danish People's Party and the Social Democratic legacy. Seeing immigration as the greatest threat to the survival of the Danish welfare state, the party has from the beginning spoken in favour of measures which could: 1) reduce significantly the pressure on the welfare state from immigration by a drastic cut down of the number of immigrants coming to the country; 2) guarantee natives priority on welfare benefits (this opens up what the Danish People's Party considers another problematic issue: naturalization). The impact of immigration on welfare was first of all considered in economic terms and associated to the list of the economic costs that the Danish taxpayers have to pay. The economic costs of immigration were considered in terms of unemployment benefits, integration on the labour market, health care, education, housing, welfare abuses and the like. Articles such as: 'Foreigners cost 29.8 billion annually' (Dansk Folkeblad 1997/5: 4-7), 'The refugee flow continues' (Dansk Folkeblad 1998/1: 4) and 'Immigration has gigantic costs' (Dansk Folkeblad 1999/1: 6-7) appeared regularly in the party journal. The position on this point was explicit: the welfare state must be for those who have paid for it with the savings of their hard work. Welfare must not be a 'free self-serve' for the many foreigners coming to the country (cf. Kjærsgaards ugebrev 04-12-2000).

Immigrants are considered to abuse the Danish welfare state to the detriment of Danes who are really in need. As expressed by Pia Kjærsgaard 'in quality of social benefit clients, foreigners get all of it, while our own homeless and our weak are placed in the second rank'

(Kjaersgaard in Dansk Folkeblad 1999/1:3). And because of this, as formulated in the 1997 policy agenda, 'the current immigration flood represents a serious threat to the survival of Denmark as a universal welfare state' (Dansk Folkeparti Principprogram 1997: 6).

The Danish People's Party's pro-welfare orientation questions what many scholars until recently considered a feature of the electorally successful radical right, namely that it is free-marketing and neo-liberal politics that have gained wind in radical right economics. Instead, protectionist positions on national economy, welfare chauvinism and politics containing the effects of globalisation appeared on the radical right parties' agenda.

The marginalisation hypothesis has often been used to explain this development. It should be the fear among the working class of how the economy develops in times of rapid socioeconomic transformations that changed the approach to economics among the radical right parties. Not neo-liberal and free marketing positions, therefore, but rather politics safeguarding the national market from the international competition and granting the necessary welfare to those considered deserving of economic help.

However, it is also interesting to observe that the electoral support to the three parties comes primarily from national and territorial contexts characterised by economic affluence, relatively low unemployment rates and a rather effective welfare state.⁵¹ These conditions have apparently not been enough to contain the reaction from some the most exposed social groups, granting a better socioeconomic protection from the challenges of globalisation (see Swank & Betz 2003). Solidarity turned instead much more inwards and immigrants were increasingly portrayed as the most concrete danger to the survival of the welfare state.

The way the Danish People's Party has developed its ideology in relation to welfare issues has not only introduced a model that seems to fit best in countries having an established and acknowledged welfare state, but in general this policy combination has introduced an alternative to the liberal and free-market formula, which did not seem to live in the best health. The pro-welfare and anti-immigration formula developed by the Danish People's Party can thus be part of the answer to the party's increasing electoral support over the last decade.

5.3.2 Recent developments in relation to welfare and welfare issues

The Danish People's Party approach to the immigration question in the 1990s was considered closely related to the welfare issue. Immigrants and refugees were first of all considered in terms of numbers and costs. This approach did not exclusively characterise the Danish People's Party. At the beginning of 1999, a new integration law was approved by the left-wing government. The aim was to define different conditions and rules for new immigrants and refugees in relation to labour market, housing conditions, education and social care. The discussions leading up to the enactment had focussed increasingly on workfare discourses in relation to integration of immigrants in the country (cf. Holm 2005: 168-177). The goal was to

⁵¹ In the case of the Northern League the observation refers mainly to the Northern Italian regions, representing the geographical and electoral reference area for this party.

help immigrants on the Danish labour market and make them less dependent on social and unemployment benefits.

Some of the Danish People's Party's 'ownership' of the immigration issue was then captured by the government parties, particularly by the Social Democratic Party. It was perhaps also in response to this political development that the Danish People's Party started to put increasing emphasis on the culture and value questions in relation to immigrants and their integration in Danish society. The party's pro-welfare rhetoric started therefore to refer to the immigrants' lack of fundamental principles and values considered essential to support the foundations of the welfare state. Among the values mentioned, the party emphasised the solidarity, collective interests, equality, tolerance and working diligence characterising the Danish society. In this way, the core elements behind the welfare construction took on a *qualitative* and *permanent* character represented by values, principles and cultural differences. The immigration impact on welfare quantified in terms of economic costs to a high degree also became a question of cultural differences.

The party's pro-welfare position and the impact of immigration on this are directly formulated in the 2001 working programme. All in all, it is difficult to overlook the differences between the 1997 policy agenda and the one released in 2001 on the eve of new elections. The 2001 programme is certainly the most articulate and comprehensive party programme; a sign that the ideological development had reached a mature phase.

The 2001 working programme makes also explicit the party's position on the welfare state. There is hardly any critique against the way the welfare state is built and financed, whereas tax reduction is given less relevance and approached more pragmatically than in the previous years. Significantly, the programme expresses a favourable position in relation to an increase of public spending. Particularly when taxes and public money are used to improve the conditions of the socially and economically needy in Danish society: old pensioners and people with low incomes, homeless, drug and alcohol addicts and so forth. As stated in the 2001 party programme:

The Danish People's Party is against tax reduction, which deteriorates the basic fields of the welfare state such as elder care, pensions, health system, education, research and the fight against crime (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001).

Another significant development in the 2001 party programme is the international context against which the development of the Danish society is framed and compared to and where interrelated and self-reinforcing processes and global dynamics are considered to play a significant role for the future of the country. Within this framework, there are two major threats to Denmark from inside and outside the country:

Solidarity and community in Denmark and in other small countries are threatened today from several sides; from inside the country by a closed and intolerant minority and from outside by globalisation and the power of the international capital (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001)

The Danish People's Party here plays the role of guardian of these values:

The Danish People's Party will work for a Denmark characterised by solidarity, responsibility and freedom. (...) It is the Danes' inescapable right and duty to defend and to hand down these important values our society is built upon: freedom, equality, individual responsibility and diligence (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001).

In general, the party puts great emphasis on what it sees as the values, norms and principles that explain why and how the Danish society has developed the way it is. Within this interpretative framework, Danish culture is considered to bear a distinctive set of norms and values representing the pillars upon which the society and its individuals have been created, formed and organized. The existence and functioning of the Danish institutions, of which the welfare state is among the most outstanding constructions, can be endangered by a high socio-economic pressure (for example from problems of economic financing due to a high number of immigrants living on welfare benefits). However, the Danish People's Party considers even more dramatic and dangerous the meeting between different cultures, which do not share the same principles, values and norms. In this sense, culture and identity have become fundamental cultural components in the DF ideology to explain the need for more restrictive immigration policies and for stricter integration rules for the immigrants already living in the country. This kind of discourse also started to demarcate even more significantly the ideology of the Danish People's Party from the positions 'inherited' from the Progress Party. The 'old' party focussed mostly on the economic costs and social implications when dealing with the immigration issue, leaving the anti-Islam positions mostly a free domain to the extremist positions of Mogens Glistrup. The 'revolution' of the Danish People's Party was to take up issues of cultural and value conflicts and to relate these to the Danish national uniqueness ('Danishness').

This position has become a central part of the party's politics particularly from 2000-2001 when the focus increasingly turned to questions of national identity, principles, values and cultural differences. The 2001 working programme is significantly entitled: 'Common values – common responsibilities'. The Danish values of 'solidarity and community (*fællesskab*)' are considered to be 'threatened from several sides; from inside the country by a closed and intolerant minority and from outside by globalisation and the power of the international capital' (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001). The aim of the Danish People's Party is to defend the threatened values, working 'for a Denmark characterised by solidarity, responsibility and freedom. (...) It is the Danes' inescapable right and duty to defend and to hand down these important values our society is built upon: freedom, equality, individual responsibility and diligence' (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001).

Within this cultural and identitarian perspective, individuals are considered different because they are carriers of different cultural background, values, beliefs, attitudes, and identi-

ties which affect the way they interact with each other, the way they live, think, work and behave. In this perspective, different cultures can be of equal value, but they are essentially incompatible and mixing them can be dangerous.

As the Danish welfare state it built upon fundamental values, its construction can be fatally endangered by the instability and cultural diversity brought into the country by immigration. As explained in the 2001 party programme:

Denmark has with a background of a millenary tradition developed a very *homogeneous* and extraordinarily stable society, where the experience of *community* and *solidarity* was and still is an important and natural part of its existence. The basic agreement on common values has been crucial for the functioning of important social functions such as the maintenance of law and order, tax collection and redistributive politics. This society is under threat. (...) Everywhere in the world it has proven impossible to transmit that sense of community and solidarity that characterises a homogeneous society to a multicultural society, where all the tensions and conflicts result from the fact that the population does not take the same values as a point of departure (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001).

Different cultures are not only incompatible, but an attempt to put them together endangers the fundamental values the receiving societies are built upon. This is also one of the main reasons the party today uses to explain why integration is so difficult and the welfare state seriously jeopardised by immigration.

5.3.3 Concrete results in welfare politics and the consequences of political influence.

From 2001, the Danish People's Party tried to consolidate its role as guarantor of the welfare state. The party had by then become the key supporting partner to the Liberal-Conservative government. The achievement of this influential position gave the party more space and means to profile itself as the protector of the interests of the old, the sick, the poor and the homeless. Most importantly, the annual budget negotiations with the government gave a unique opportunity to achieve concrete results in favour of these groups.

After every finance act, the Danish People's Party leadership emphasised its crucial role in ensuring the necessary welfare improvements. In particular, pensioners have often come on the party agenda in negotiations with the government in terms of higher pensions and better services for the elderly. But also in other areas such as the healthcare sector, the party has used its influence to ask for better hospitals, shorter waiting lists for operations and treatments and recognition of alternative medical therapies. According to the party in 2002, most of these expenses could have been financed by money saved from the cutbacks on immigration, asylum seekers and from the reduction of the economic aid to developing countries.

Already in the first finance act law agreement for 2002 (Finansministeriet 2002), the role wielded by the Danish People's Party was clear. As clearly expressed by Pia Kjaersgaard, the fact that the party decided to support the Liberal-Conservative government did not mean that the party 'should automatically vote for the politics of the government', for as the DF

leader assured, the party would have voted in favour only when it was 'the right politics for Denmark' (Kjærsgaards ugebrev 04-02-2002). The party has at times used this position to 'blackmail' government policies, threatening the government with withdrawal of support in order to obtain concrete results or to manifest disapproval of policies supported by the government. The Danish People's Party has obtained significant results, considering that the party has not been in office and has never had a ministry or another relevant post in the three Liberal-Conservative governments that have governed the country since 2001.

On several occasions the party has contributed to the approval of extra resources for sectors strongly supported by the party. In the finance act for 2002 these included for instance: funding for reduction of waiting lists in hospitals; an extension of the maternity leave period financed by public benefits; withdrawal of the planned cuts in the education system; freedom for the elderly to choose between private and public home help, a reduction of their expenses to heating and extra economic support to pensioners with low incomes (cf. Finansministeriet 2002: 8-9).

Public spending for immigration was where the Danish People's Party wanted to see significant cutbacks on the public budget. This measure was already included in the first finance act approved by the government with the support of the party and paved the way to the more comprehensive rewriting of the law on immigration and integration that was approved in May 2002.

In the various finance acts approved since 2002 the Danish People's Party left clear fingerprints on issues concerning the elderly and improvement of the healthcare system, and the fact that this was decided together with a bourgeois government put the Danish People's Party welfare profile even more into relief. This was used by the party as a situation that could better promote its task. As Pia Kjærsgaard observed:

even if the Danish People's Party is part of the parliamentary basis (*parlamentariske grundlag*) of a bourgeois and liberal government (...) we have always had most at heart to help the weak and most vulnerable groups in our society; among them the old, the sick and the handicapped. (...) I am glad for the role of the Danish People's Party as the parliamentary social guarantor. (...) There is good reason to be glad for every step in the direction of a society which cares. (...) we can only take a little step forward every time – but it is all right, so far the course is right' (Kjærsgaards ugebrev 14-07-2003).

At present the party defines straightforwardly its role as: '(...) the social consciousness of the Liberal and Conservative government, keeping an eye on every attack that may be directed against the welfare state' (Kjærsgaards ugebrev 26-10-2005).

However, the party has in practice also given its support to politics which have endangered the welfare state, for example by backing up on the tax reductions strongly wanted by the government, which have benefitted in particular taxpayers with higher incomes. But also in this case, the party has been able to promote itself as the guarantor of the welfare state, by

ensuring the electorate that its support is actually conditioned by the influence these policies have on the condition of the Danish welfare state.

5.4 ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT POLITICS

5.4.1 *Anti-establishment and anti-intellectual politics in the Progress Party*

Particularly in the 1970s, the ideology of the Progress Party was strongly characterised by anti establishment politics and by a populist rhetoric and style. This emerged for example in the attempt to mobilise people against the elites, claiming that the will of the common man was to be considered ‘supreme over every other standard’ (Shils 1956). As many other populist parties, the Progress Party supported a more direct involvement of the people in democracy via more popular referenda that according to the party should be organized ‘every time a government introduces an important piece of legislation with the support of a restricted majority’ (Fremskridtsparti 1978: 12).

The Progress Party’s populist and anti-establishment thinking emerged also in the frequent reference to the opposition of the mass against the elite and their divergent interests and priorities. The party’s official documents portray the public administration as out of control and overburdened by bureaucratic measures, paper pushing and unnecessary costs.

The party considered this situation to heavily affect the work of many Danish citizens and in particular the private sector because, as spelled out in the 1978 Progress Party programme: ‘bakers, bookshop keepers, doctors and so on are better employed baking bread, selling books and curing people than fighting with public officials about how to fill in all kind of forms’ (Fremskridtsparti 1978: 4).

The party also criticized the power and privileges achieved by politicians, suggesting drastic measures such as a reduction of the number of MPs from 179 to only 40, introducing a monthly turn out of the MPs to ensure a political shift. The party nourished the same distrust for the intellectual elite, considered closely related to the political elite. In particular, the party denounced the widespread norm that academic jobs were more prestigious than a manual work (Fremskridtsparti 1980: 9), asserting that academics and intellectuals represented an unproductive sector in the Danish society.

As any other field seeking to be ‘productive’ in society, culture and arts should – according to the party- be self-financed, driven and supported by the private sector and certainly not subsidised by public money. In a perfectly ultraliberal style, the Progress Party condemned public funding of cultural initiatives and activities, which were considered to hamper the artist’s creativity and to burden the public budget unnecessarily. For this reason, the party wanted to abolish all kinds of public support to culture, encouraging writers, painters and artists in general to make their own living out of their activity, or to reconsider their choice and find another job when the engagement in the cultural market was not proportional to the economic return (Fremskridtsparti 1989: 23). But the populist rhetoric against the elites and championing the virtues of the common Dane did not translate into an explicit commitment to

Danish values, norms, principles and virtues. In line with the party's neo-liberal style, support for individual well-being and freedom were considered as necessary premises for the functioning of the society.

This position, as we will see, is different from that later formulated by the Danish People's Party. In contrast to most of the recent radical right, the Progress Party did not put particular emphasis on the need to safeguard national identity and to protect ethnical homogeneity against the threat 'from outside'. At least until the 1980s, there was little or no reference to a historical core of Danish principles and values endangered by other cultures and life styles. Particularly in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Progress Party's approach to the national question was rather characterised by a pragmatic emphasis on the geographical extension and population in relation to other European countries. This entailed that Denmark had a limited decisional influence at the international level and therefore needed to cooperate with other countries. As it is spelled out in the 1980 Progress Party programme:

The Danish ambitions on foreign policy must adjust to the fact that from an international point of view we are amongst the smallest and therefore least influential countries. Aware of this fact, Denmark should use only a very limited amount of economic and human resources on foreign policy issues (Fremskridtsparti 1980: 14).

It was a portrayal of Denmark that differed significantly from that promoted today by the Danish People's Party. This (also) has an historical explanation. At the beginning of the 1980s, internationalisation of the markets was still limited and the migration patterns to Europe were not significant enough to mobilise public opinion. The international power was exerted at higher levels and mainly seen in terms of the opposition between USA and the USSR. From this perspective, the national role was considered in relation to other and at that time different dynamics and international relations.

5.4.2 Anti-establishment politics in the Danish People's Party

The anti-establishment critique was particularly strong in the period that the Danish People's Party spent at the margins of the Danish politics. The critique went in two directions: one features a 'classic' populist and anti-elitist reaction, accusing the political and intellectual elite of being disconnected from the common people; the other was specifically and held the mainstream parties responsible for the consequences of their immigration politics on society. The party judged the political establishment directly responsible for years of a mistaken immigration regime. In an article commenting the support to the Danish People's Party in districts with a high number of immigrants, Pia Kjærsgaard blatantly observed in 1998 that:

The political upper-class at *Christiansborg* and the press have not yet understood how serious the situation is. (...) The political upper-class is able to give a talk (...) and to instruct the fools in the residential concrete housing how to behave. 'Be tolerant! Look at us!' - they say, from the

safety of their homes and in front of the fireplace, where tolerance does not cost anything (Kjærsgaard in Dansk Folkeblad 1998/3: 24).

For the Danish People's Party, the mainstream parties had in several ways disregarded what was good for the country. The party saw this political irresponsibility not only in relation to the immigration politics approved by the previous governments, but also in the politics supporting the process of European integration, which for the party would put national sovereignty in serious danger. The party's anti-establishment was then mainly directed against the position and political results achieved by the parties in government, rather than against the abuse of power and money. Since 2001, anti-establishment issues—not surprisingly—have become a much less relevant topic in the Danish People's Party agenda.

5.5 ANTI-IMMIGRATION

5.5.1 *The Progress Party and anti-immigration in the mid-1980s.*

As mentioned above, the first signs of electoral decline for the Progress Party came in the mid-1980s suggesting that the electoral success as a neo-liberal forerunner, with tax protest on the agenda was coming to an end (see Glans 1984).

In 1982, a centre right government coalition led by the Conservatives implemented a number of structural reforms that made the existence of the party much less appealing to the Danish electorate. In 1984, the Progress Party reached its lowest result ever with less than 4 pct. of the votes. By the mid-1980s it was clear that the party had to find another political strategy to survive. The long period with the bourgeois government led by the conservative Poul Schlüter had in many respects weakened the electoral appeal of several of the Progress Party's original issues, and in the 1980s many considered the party to be politically worn out.

But some other and deeper reasons for what happened in the mid-1980s must be searched in the party's ideological transformations. It was for example in the 1980s that the party started to run an anti-immigration position. Actually, already in the 1970s, Mogens Glistrup felt that anti-immigration politics could mobilise a part of the Danish electorate (Goul Andersen 2007). At that time the situation was not yet completely ripe and Glistrup's uncontrolled and often extreme statements alienated the vote of the better-educated.

However, while in 1979 the Progress Party voters did not deviate from the others in terms of attitudes towards immigration, in the mid-1980s an increasing number of Progress Party voters started to express anti-immigration grievances (Bjørklund & Goul Andersen 2002). This has to be seen in relation to the development of the immigration flows to the country. During the 1980s, the number of asylum seekers increased exponentially, from 800 in 1983 to 4,300 in 1984 and 8,700 in 1985 (Goul Andersen & Bjørklund, 2000: 200). Their number was adding up to those immigrants who had come as guest workers during the economic upturn in the 1960s.

In November 1973 a law approved by the government stopped the entrance of foreign workers to Denmark responding to the economic stagnation and increasing unemployment that in the 1970s had started to pressure the world economy. But the measure did not stop immigration. Similarly to other Western countries, several immigrants who had come to Denmark decided to remain and were later joined by their families through family reunions. Asylum seekers were also still allowed to come into the country in accordance with international conventions.

Before the 1980s the immigration issue was basically non-existent in the Progress Party programmes and in the official party literature. The only issue which until then had something to do with non-Western countries in the programmes of the Progress Party concerned economic aid to underdeveloped economies, which the party wanted to cancel from the public budget and finance only with private money. It was only after 1986 that immigration became a relevant issue on the party's agenda. An official document on local politics published in 1986 has a paragraph on 'foreign workers', in which the party declares itself against any form of positive affirmative action, adding that foreigners 'are welcome to keep their own cultural habits, language and religion, but tax payers must not be charged for these expenses' (Fremskridtsparti 1986: 2).

The political debate followed the situation in the country closely. In 1983 the Parliament started to work on a reform of the existing immigration law. The law that came out of the political negotiations was described as one of the most liberal in Western Europe, ensuring formal rights to immigrants and refugees on matters such as family reunions and expulsions, but it was later criticised by most parties, including those which had helped write it. During the 1980s the law went through several adjustments (Gaasholt & Togeby 1995: 27-31; Holm 2005: 217-257). It was against this background that the Progress Party started to play an important role, influencing the debate and the public opinion on specific aspects related to immigration, immigration policy and their impact on Danish society. The increasing importance given to this issue emerges clearly in the programmes from the late 1980s.

In the 1989 party programme, a section deals specifically with the 'Foreigners in Denmark' and finds place under the discussion about foreign policy. Here, the party declares that the 'invasion of the foreigners' is primarily a consequence of 'the foolishness of Danish legislation' and therefore 'it is a mistake to blame foreigners for taking advantage of such a law' (Fremskridtsparti 1989).

Initially, the Progress Party was mainly concerned about the economic costs of immigration. Its position on immigration, at least in the official party programmes, was that immigrants were welcome in Denmark, as far as they were able to provide for themselves and their family without economic aid from the Danish state and taxpayers (Fremskridtsparti 1989: 26-27). The party opposed any form of 'special treatment' or positive discrimination that could help immigrants on the housing market, labour market or in the educational system.

Another central issue that started to be discussed in the 1980s was the conditions and rules for asylum seekers. The 1983 immigration law had in fact broadened the terms for the acquisition of the refugee status, including under the definition of 'de facto' refugees also asylum seekers who were not directly mentioned in the Geneva Convention. The Progress Party was among the first to protest against the new rules, which were considered to generate an uncontrollable flow of refugees to the country.

In 1989, the Progress Party insisted that 'only genuine political refugees' were to be allowed entry and only when 'Denmark is for them a natural getaway country' (people from the North-Eastern bloc or boatpeople saved by Danish ships in international waters). The party specified that only the quotas of refugees regulated by international agreements had to be accepted by Denmark, meaning that recognition of other refugee status had to be removed from the law.

As we will see in the following pages, also the Danish People's Party initially put stronger emphasis on economic and cost-benefit explanations in relation to immigration. The focus later turned to other cultural and value aspects in relation to immigration and asylum politics. However, to some extent, also the Progress Party dealt with issues that did not necessarily or directly imply economic consequences and cost and benefits estimations. For example, it was the Progress Party that started to criticise the right achieved by immigrants (non-European citizens) in 1981 to vote and run in municipal and regional elections after three years of residence in the country. The Danish People's Party today has the same position on this issue, claiming that the right to vote should be given only to Danish citizens (Dansk Folkeparti Principprogram 1997: 6). Precisely in relation to citizenship, there is another ideological continuity between the position developed by the Progress Party and the Danish People's Party that has to do with the question of naturalisation. Already in the 1980s, the Progress Party started to discuss naturalisation policy, asking for a general tightening of the law and accusing the public authorities of being too 'generous' in granting Danish citizenship to foreigners. Naturalisation is also in the case of the Danish People's Party to be considered the highest reward given by the Danish society to an immigrant for his or her successful efforts to integrate in Danish society in social, economic and now cultural terms.

On the eve of new elections in 1990, the Progress Party formulated a 'list' of problems and solutions related to immigration: 1) Denmark allowed too many foreigners to come into the country, and number was to be reduced by stopping family reunions; 2) illegal immigration had to stop with the help of the police forces; 3) economic benefits to immigrants had to be regulated by law so that a foreigner could not receive more than the amount responding to a minimum pension; 4) the so-called two years law had to be abolished and refugees should be sent back to their countries also after more than two years from their arrival; 5) immigrants who had committed a crime had to be sent back to their native country; 6) the naturalisation law needed to be significantly tightened; 7) the construction of a big Mosque in Copenhagen

had to stop immediately. The pamphlet finished with the motto: 'Long live Danishness' (Fremskridtsparti 1990).

In an official Progress Party document published a year later, further solutions were proposed to contrast the costs and negative impact due to immigration (Fremskridtsparti 1991). This indicated that the question increasingly engaged the party and that it started to be considered under other perspectives than the merely economic. The document mentions the abolition of the publicly sponsored mother tongue teaching, the removal of the immigrants' right to vote in local elections and the necessity to compile ethnically informed statistics on crime in order to respond to the challenges created by the immigrants in Denmark.

Looking at these old documents from the Progress Party it is interesting how the Danish People's Party undoubtedly took with it some of the concrete political suggestions already advanced in the late 1980s.

The Progress Party's official position on immigration in the 1980s underlined thus mostly the economic costs associated with an increasing number of immigrants and refugees, although the position emphasising the cultural and value differences between Islam and the West was not far behind. In 1988, the party already formulated slogans such as 'Return Denmark to the Danes!' and 'Denmark can not culturally, economically, or socially bear the weight of more refugees' (Fremskridtsparti 1988: 2).

But if the party's official position on immigration had been cleared of the extreme standpoints, the rhetoric used by leading members of the Progress Party, first of all by Mogens Glistrup, was neither moderate nor carefully formulated. To define Muslims, Glistrup introduced the term Mohammedanians (*muhamedener*), a word with a clearly derogatory connotation. With time, the discussion on immigration and immigrants became more and more polarised. In the 1990s, Mogens Glistrup spoke increasingly about what he called the Mohammedanian threat (see Glistrup 1994). He warned Denmark against the danger from Muslim immigrants arguing that 'we have to be 1000 pct. sure not to underestimate the Mohammedanian threat, otherwise our descendants will no longer be Danes in Denmark', adding that 'if Islam triumphs, our world dies' (Glistrup 1994: 456).

The Progress Party undoubtedly contributed to taking the immigration issue up to discussion, giving voice to the most critical positions. However, Glistrup and some others in the party had driven the discussion too far. Voters who were perhaps sceptical about the country's immigration regime, but who did not want to be considered racists started to leave the party. At the same time the Progress Party gained increasing support among manual workers and voters with a lower educational attainment (see chapter 8).

The more moderate wing of the Progress Party had instead understood that it was electorally advantageous to be critical, but in a more careful and pragmatic way in relation to the immigration question. This would have helped the party gain more influence in Danish politics. It was the strategy that Pia Kjaersgaard and some other supporters tried without very much success in the Progress Party, but which gave results with the Danish People's Party.

5.5.2 The Danish People's Party on immigration

In 1995, the programmatic position of the Danish People's Party on asylum and immigration had several points in common with the issues that the Progress Party had taken up in the past. The Danish People's Party ten point programme of 1995 asked for a general tightening up of the law both for asylum and immigration. In relation to asylum seekers and refugees the party asked for more rigid rules. Already in 1995 the party was in favour of 'massive and durable repatriation politics'⁵² of refugees who had come to the country and could go back to their homelands. This proposal was followed by plans of investments in aid programmes that had to be realised 'on place', in the refugees' neighbourhood countries. The party considered this the best way to help as many people in need as possible, rather than only those few who could manage to flee from their countries.

The demands of the party in relation to immigration included much stricter measures for family reunification and prohibition of marriages of convenience, which the party considers a widespread practice among ethnic minorities. Crime among immigrants also had to be punished by sending immigrants out of the country as soon as they had served their sentence. In relation to the foreigners already living in the country, the Danish People's Party asked for the abolition of the right to vote at the municipal elections after three years of residence in the country. This right was established in the country in 1981 with the vote of the left-wing parties and the Social Liberals (RV), when the political orientation was to give immigrants living in the country the same political and civil rights as Danish citizens independently from their level of integration, linguistic skills and knowledge of Danish society. As seen above, already in the 1980s the Progress Party had asked to review the law and to withdraw this right. The Danish People's Party continued to be of the same idea, considering the right to vote something exclusively reserved to Danish citizens and to citizens of the other Nordic countries after three years of residence in the country. For the party the right to vote is inextricably associated with the knowledge, understanding and complete integration in Danish society. Otherwise the whole structure and organization of society can be jeopardised.

In the late 1990s, the Danish People's Party started to focus on an issue that would increasingly engage the party in the years to come: the question of citizenship. As early as 1997, the party described the naturalisation procedures pursued by the governments as a 'ticking bomb' under the Danish society. The bomb was represented by the 6-8000 foreigners getting Danish citizens every year. An article in *Dansk Folkeblad* reported that:

⁵² The demand for an effective repatriation policy is frequently put forward by the party, recently in relation to its pressure on the government to send back refugees from Iraq, for which the party was strongly criticized. The way the party interprets what it considered the convenience refugees (*bekvemmelighedsflygtninge*) and their stubbornness to stay is interesting: 'Show responsibility to your land and help reconstruct your countries (...) Re-establish your self-respect. Re-establish our respect for you. (...) Go home and do something for your country' (Pia Kjærsgaard's talk at the Danish People's Party annual meeting, 3-4 October 1998, Vissenbjerg, Fyn).

It should be something very special for a foreigner to become naturalised in Denmark and to become a Danish citizen. Today the naturalisation law is an office practice (...) the expedition office grinds every year like a grinding mill thousands of foreigners into the promised land. This attack against the Danish people and outrageous rape against the spirit and words of the Constitution is a ticking bomb under Denmark (Dansk Folkeblad 1997/1: 2).

In the same year, an issue of *Dansk Folkeblad* published the names and surnames of all the 1200 foreigners that had just become Danish citizens, emphasising that this practice was taking place with the support of most of the mainstream parties. To make the point clear to the public opinion, in spring 2001, the party made a similar public announcement in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten*, calling attention to the fact that a majority of the ‘new Danes’ was of Middle Eastern origin.⁵³

The Danish People’s Party considered most of these ‘new Danes’ undeserving of Danish citizenship, because they were not yet fully integrated in Danish society. The DF considers Danish citizenship a gift reserved to the few who have proven able to accept and assimilate the Danish culture, values and principles and who do not represent a cost for the country. The question was also one of numbers. Given the continued influx of immigrants into the country, their high birth rates in comparison to Danish families and their refusal to assimilate, the party felt that it was only a matter of time before the immigrant community would be strong enough to pose a fundamental challenge to Europe’s values, culture and principles.

In 1996-97 the Danish People’s Party made concrete proposals for a substantial change in the practice of naturalisation. First of all this had to follow a paradigm of reward, according to which only a number of years of permanent residence in the country would open up for Danish citizenship (the party suggests raising that period to a minimum of ten years). But even more determinant should be the degree of assimilation, considered in terms of active social and economic contribution to the country’s wealth, an in-depth knowledge of the Danish language, society and history.⁵⁴ The party also suggested that foreigners applying for Danish citizenship had to sign a declaration in which they agreed to respect important social norms and democratic rules, for example gender equality. As formulated in the 1997 policy agenda in the paragraph on ‘Foreigners and the naturalisation law’:

Danish naturalisation must be given only to persons exempted from punishment, who have proved able to do well and who, in the course of ten years in Denmark, with their efforts have benefitted the country. Moreover, they must have contributed to the Danish welfare – and only so far the person shows in a written and spoken test to master the Danish language and to possess good knowledge about the Danish culture, Danish social conditions (*samfundsforhold*) and a good knowledge of Danish history, can an applicant apply for the bill that must be discussed in Parliament, in order to obtain Danish naturalisation (Dansk Folkeparti Principprogram 1997: 6).

⁵³ See also the DF website: <http://www.danskfolkeparti.dk/pdf/file-53-6412-24499.pdf> (last accessed: 27-03-2008).

⁵⁴ Foreigners applying for Danish citizenship have to pass a language tests and a cultural proficiency test.

The party suggested a return to the praxis used by the ‘founding fathers’ behind the naturalisation law in Denmark: Guldberg and Grundtvig. At that time (1849), every single individual case was discussed and evaluated in Parliament. Application of this procedure would clearly imply a drastic reduction in the number of foreigners being naturalised in Denmark to only a few hundred every year.

Some of the restrictions mentioned above were implemented in spring 2002, as part of the new immigration law that was approved by the government with the support of the Danish People’s Party. The number of foreigners becoming Danish citizens fell significantly in the following years. This result has been afterwards often used by the party as evidence that the party is actually able to deliver concrete political results when it is given responsibility. As underlined by Pia Kjærsgaard in 2002:

(...) last Friday we received the happy news that so far only about 600 applications for Danish citizenship have been accepted. This number contrasts directly with the 17,000 foreigners who became Danish citizens last year. (...) this is an issue which is going to be successfully realised. No one before the Danish People’s Party has fought against the catastrophic course coming with the automatic distribution of Danish citizenship in large quantities as [it has happened] in recent years. We are now almost living up to the spirit of our constitution, saying that citizenship can only be given by law, where the Parliament decides for each individual person who wants to be accepted into the Danish community. (...) the demands related to citizenship now signal that foreigners must make an effort if they want to be accepted as equal members in [Danish] society. Also the demand that they must declare their loyalty to the democratic pillars in Danish society sent a signal that there is no place in Denmark for a parallel society with its own norms. Denmark must remain a community of people and not a multicultural society with ethnic closed enclaves, whose only interest is to become more and more numerous (Kjærsgaards ugebrev 07-10-2002).

From 1998 the issue of naturalisation clearly became more relevant for the party agenda and in the same year the party presented a proposition to the *Folketing* to change the practices of conferring and retrieving citizenship (cf. Dansk Folkeparti Forslag B36, 1998). This included minimum ten years of permanent residence in the country, no criminal record, no prison sentences and to pass a written and oral exam, certifying the applicant’s good knowledge of the Danish language, history and social norms and principles. Besides, the right to withdraw citizenship in case of false declaration and – up to ten years after the assignation – in case of crimes implying a prison sentence. The party intended to put a stop to the ‘widespread idea that the Danish citizenship has no value’ and to bring to an end ‘the automatic mass distribution of the last years’ because ‘it must be a privilege to become a Danish citizen (...) and nobody wishes to have Denmark populated by citizens of a foreign nationality, who do not have the same historical, linguistic and cultural belonging and who are not capable of enriching the country (...)’.

Naturalisation became therefore for the Danish People’s Party a way to emphasise an organic view of the Danish community, where belonging and identity in terms of shared val-

ues, principles, history and culture are considered embedded attributes that can almost only be transmitted by birth.

An important influence in the elaboration of the Danish People's Party cultural and identity discourse has come from the two protestant pastors and later Danish People's Party MPs Søren Krarup and Jesper Langballe. But in particular Søren Krarup in his years as party MP (from 2001) has expanded and explained the position on the nativist questions in the cultural and religious realms. Krarup's first official contacts with the party dated back to the 1990s. In 1997, he was invited to speak at the annual meeting, where he explained his political engagement arguing that 'the Danish situation was so despairing that a Dane should no longer doubt and support those who support Denmark' (Dansk Folkeblad 1997/6: 6).

When he officially joined the Danish People's Party, Søren Krarup had already developed a clear position on immigration and naturalisation. Krarup defined in fact the achievement of the Danish citizenship as 'the most precious gift to a foreigner' (in Dansk Folkeblad 2002/5: 13), whereas looking at 'how the country's most precious gift to a foreigner was reduced to a poor and indifferent item, which was automatically assigned to people who had no relation to or insight into Danish society was considered 'disheartening' and a practice that needed to be changed (in Dansk Folkeblad 2002/6: 12). For Krarup naturalisation is something intrinsically related to identity, culture and religion; something that can almost exclusively be inherited from one's parents and only hardly acquired by law, or as also MP Jesper Langballe once put it: "something that comes together with mother's milk".⁵⁵ As a consequence, cultural differences can hardly be bridged or overcome. For as Krarup has once observed:

It should not be difficult to understand that Arabs and Africans are so different from the Danish culture, tradition and language that it will be very difficult for them to integrate in Denmark. (...) It is clear that when we have to give citizenship, it plays an important role whether the person is for example a Christian Asian. I think that a Christian Asian has greater chances of being integrated than a Muslim Asian, naturally (Krarup quoted in Holm 2005: 103).

In 2001, Krarup was appointed party member of the naturalisation committee (*infødsretsudvalget*) and in the following years he exerted a rather influential role in the debate about Danish citizenship and in the negotiations which in 2002 tightened the criteria regulating the law on naturalisation.

In recent years, perhaps also as a result of the results achieved with the restrictions applied in this field, the Danish People's Party has started to tone down the character of the debate on naturalisation, focusing more generally on the question of the democratic values and principles that the party considers threatened by the meeting with other cultures.

⁵⁵ Jesper Langballe during a debate on immigration and integration at Hotel Helnan Phoenix, Aalborg, August 25 2005.

5.6. Identity, culture, values and the Danish nation under threat: distinguishing aspects of the Danish People's Party's ideology and agenda setting

5.6.1 The Danish People's Party and the commitment to the Danish nation

A strong national profile is one of the features that the Danish People's Party has always emphasised in relation to the party origin and commitment. This was already unmistakably expressed by the founders in the choice of the party name, in which the 'Danish' character of the party is clearly underlined. In a way, this represented a rupture with the Progress Party, in which the word progress (*fremskridt*) clearly underlined the party orientation towards political and social change. The name chosen for the new party accentuated instead the idea of identity and belonging (a Danish party for the Danes) and the commitment to safeguard an existing condition from the threats from inside and outside the Danish nation.

The 1997 policy agenda was built upon what Pia Kjærsgaard defined the essential 'red line' in order to understand the nature and scope of her party. As she formulated it: 'the clear general line in the programme is our warm and strong national nature' and that 'the Danish People's Party is proud of Denmark' adding that 'we love our fatherland and we feel an historical obligation to protect the Danish heritage' (Dansk Folkeparti principprogram 1997: 3). This obligation is followed by the importance of defending and protecting national sovereignty and to feel part of a community of people, whose task is to take care of the weakest in the Danish society. The first paragraph of the 1997 policy agenda dealing with political objectives points out that the party works to 're-establish Denmark's independence and freedom (...) and to resist any attempt to reduce people's freedom' (Dansk Folkeparti Principprogram 1997: 4).

Despite the centrality that is given to national identity, national belonging and culture, there are still only vague explanations about what this concretely means for the party. Every reference to the Danish nation and to Danish national identity is summarised in definitions such as culture, the Danish heritage, the Danish history and the Danish community. On the contrary, there is little doubt about what is threatening the country, its freedom and independence: immigration and the development of a multiethnic society on the one side and the European Union on the other.

Compared to other parties, the Danish People's Party leadership has never been afraid to assert that the party was 'born as a red and white party, a Danish party'. The party has undoubtedly and in several ways proved to be a red and white party. For instance, the use of national symbols such as the Danish flag (*Dannebrog*) was one of the first symbols used to emphasise the party's distinctiveness in relation to the other parties. The party has never been afraid to be accused of having strong nationalist feelings, nor of being criticised for being traditionalist and old-fashioned when celebrating traditional habits and common places of the Danish culture and way of life.

Very early, the Danish People's Party got engaged in the role of guardian of the achievements of Danish society in terms of welfare, democratic values, individual and collec-

tive freedom, working ethic and diligence, communitarian responsibility and so forth. This task has become more explicit with time, as the different programmes show.

In the 1997 policy agenda, the party's commitment to the nation was still formulated in abstract terms. In the 2001 working programme, the scope of the party is described in much more concrete terms. The specificity of the Danish nation is here embedded in the values, principles and religious and cultural heritage achieved through the historical and social development of the country:

The Danish People's Party will work for a Denmark characterized by belonging, responsible awareness and freedom. Our land's historical development is established by our culture, which means by those norms and religion, faith, attitudes and behaviour that the people have chosen and uphold. It is the Danes' inevitable right and duty to defend and transmit these important values on which our society is built: freedom, equality, individual responsibility and diligence. There is no alternative to these. The Danish People's Party will defend and strengthen the Danish values, which represent a condition for Denmark to keep on being a free, vigorous and humane society also in the future (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001).

In the latest working programme released in 2007, the Danish people's Party is even more specific when it comes to defining the Danish values that must be defended and which are 'the freedom of speech, equality, broad-mindedness and tolerance' (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2007). Denmark is considered to be one of the most libertarian, equal and rich societies in the world as a result of the values held by the Danes and thanks to the cultural influence from the rest of Europe and from the US.

The concept of nation and of its people are in the ideology of the Danish People's Party inextricably related to the threat that immigration represents for the survival of the Danish identity and culture as we know it. Multiculturalism and the development of a multiethnic society therefore represent the worst case scenario. In the first years after the party formation, the opposition to a multiethnic and multicultural society had a pragmatic oriented and populist character. As early as 1997, the Danish People's Party launched a campaign⁵⁶ against the political establishment's attempt to transform Denmark into a multiethnic society:

Denmark is going to be transformed into a multiethnic society. But the Danish population has not been asked whether it wants this development or not. [The party] will therefore ask for a referendum on this issue (in Dansk Folkeblad 1997/2: 2).

The development of a multiethnic and multicultural society was considered an ideological and political project planned by the political and intellectual elite and in particular by left-wing milieus. Intellectuals and politicians were accused of not listening to ordinary people – who were the first to bear the consequences of the social changes provoked by immigration flows.

⁵⁶ This was only the first of a number of campaigns the Danish People's Party has launched across the years. This political form has to be seen in relation to the position of the radical right on the direct involvement of the population in the decision and law making, entailing a more frequent use of referenda. The launching of public campaigns is also characteristic of the Northern League and of the Austrian Freedom Party.

At the end of 1997, the Danish People's Party presented a parliamentary bill for a referendum on the question: 'Should Denmark be a multiethnic society?' (Dansk Folkeparti L58 1997-98). In the past, the Progress Party had advanced similar requests, where the demand for a referendum was used to signal that the party was the voice of the ordinary people against the experiments and ideals of opportunistic and deracinated elites.

For Hans-Georg Betz (cf. Betz 2009) the contemporary radical right ideology represents a fusion of nativism and populism, where the 'fight for the survival of the nation as a culturally distinct entity and against multiculturalism has become pivotal for the ideological development of radical right wing populist discourse'. In his words: 'the nativist right claims for itself to represent and express the "defensive instinct" of ordinary people against the nefarious multicultural fantasies and experiments of deracinated, cosmopolitan elites'. In the case of the Danish People's Party, the ideological development towards the nativist discourse was gradual. The nationalist/populist approach was initially strongly emphasised by the party, while the foundation and arguments of the nativist discourse were less developed and 'refined'. It is in particular after 2001 that the party started to put special emphasis on this kind of approach.

5.6.2 The cultural and value impact of immigration: the Danish People's Party after 2001

The immigration question is a relevant issue in the 2001 Danish People's Party programme, even if it is not the first question mentioned in the programme. The consequences and implications of immigration are in fact seen within the broader social and economic context, such as the welfare state, national security, the globalisation process, the education system and so forth.

As indicated in the title of the programme (Common values – common responsibility), immigration is discussed increasingly in relation to culture, identity, values and principles; culture is interpreted as the determinant of identity. This also means that beliefs and practices are derived from and not equated with one's cultural identity.

Particularly from 2001, the party started to give increasing relevance to the cultural question, interpreting immigration within a paradigm of cultural diversity, where the contrast is seen in terms of a 'clash of cultures' between the two dominant cultures in the world: modernity and Islam. From this perspective, the Western Christian Judaic civilization and culture is considered the carrier of progressive, open and tolerant values such as democracy and freedom of speech and religion, whereas Islam is often portrayed as a 'backward culture', bearing a medieval, rigid and intolerant view of the world (Dansk Folkeparti, Danmarks Fremtid 2001: 191). Immigration in general is presented into a perspective of 'national catastrophe' (Kjærsgaard in Dansk Folkeblad 1999/5:3) that has to be stopped. Its consequences are compared to events of historic dimensions, which in the past seriously threatened Denmark's existence, like the wars with Sweden in the 17th century (where Denmark lost the important territories of Skåne, Halland and Blekinge in the Astensund), the loss of the 'native soil' of South-

ern Jutland to the Germans in 1864 and the occupation of Denmark by Nazi Germany in 1940 (Kjærsgaard in Dansk Folkeblad 1999/6: 3).

Immigration to the advanced capitalist societies of the Western world is also considered an ‘ill-fated consequence of the fact that a number of countries outside the Western cultural sphere cannot manage to create a sustainable development’ (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001). But underdevelopment and political oppression are not provoked by socio-economic or institutional reasons, but rather considered the result of a backward culture, which is unable to create and support the development of democratic values and principles. The Western world should not bear the consequences of the failed development caused by others. In particular, small and ethnically homogeneous countries like Denmark are considered particularly vulnerable to the consequences of the undemocratic and uneven development in the non-Western countries:

Denmark is the Danes’ land, it is very small and its existence as a stable democracy also in the future is conditioned by the fact that its demographic composition does not change dramatically. The solution to the problems of the Third World is to be found within the same countries – they can only achieve stability by adopting important cultural elements from the West, such as liberty, democracy, equality, enlightenment, economic reforms and control of population growth (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001).

The only way to save Denmark from the catastrophe is to ‘find a point of reference’ in the national culture, values, principles and identity and to introduce strict rules in the immigration regime of the country.

As observed in earlier chapters (see Chapter 3 and 4), party programmes are often formulated in a politically correct and moderate way. The 2001 programme gives an example of this. Immigration is seen as the plague that the Western and civilised part of the world is facing in the 21st century, but to the careful reader it is surprising that the programme omits any direct reference to Islam or to the Muslim community.⁵⁷

But from 2001, the party significantly hardened its position against Islam, playing to popular concerns about the threat posed by Muslim countries and Muslims in general. This was more explicit in other party literature than in the official working program. The party’s 2001 book ‘Denmark’s future. Your land, your choice(/vote)’ (*Danmarks Fremtid. Dit land – dit valg*), for instance, largely amplified fears of Islam. The book cover portrays a group of demonstrating people and the two men (of clearly Middle Eastern origin) in the front are seen brandishing a pistol and holding a Palestinian flag; right under the picture the caption: ‘Denmark’s future’. Inside the book, pictures, interviews, statistics on crimes and violence committed by ethnic minorities and examples from other countries are used to illustrate what the

⁵⁷ With the only exception of this passage: ‘There is no society in the world where a peaceful integration of Muslims in another culture has been possible and it is irresponsible to inflict on Denmark a cultural clash, which risks having serious consequences’ (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001).

party considers the obvious result of three decades of a failed immigration regime and politics. Danish society is described as under serious threat and a chapter on the Kreuzberg district in Berlin describes how Denmark may look in some years. The German residents are described as an isolated minority within their own country, where Turkish is the spoken language in schools, shops and mosques, Islam is the practiced religion, and women bear headscarves (cf. Dansk Folkeparti 2001).

The about first hundred pages of the book show the current situation in Denmark. Largely as a consequence of what the party considers the complete failure of the immigration and asylum politics, Danish society is described being under heavy pressure. The problems listed in the book are numerous and their impact overwhelming; high unemployment rates among immigrants and public spending on social benefits to immigrants and refugees, urban ghettos, crime among young second generation immigrants and an educational system hampered by the difficulties of integrating a large number of students with little knowledge of Danish and other customs and habits.

What from 2000-2001 becomes central in the eyes of the Danish People's Party is the view of Islam as a fundamental threat to Western values and culture. International events fuelled this equivalence. After 9/11, the Danish People's Party clearly radicalized its rhetoric against Islam. The difference between Islam and Islamism (radical Islam) at times disappeared from the party political discourses and Islam was more and more often directly associated with a totalitarian and violent ideology, whose destructive effects were seriously jeopardising Western democratic principles and values from within.

At the Danish People's Party annual meeting of 2001, which was held only a few days after 9/11, several prominent party members emphasised the direct connection between radical fundamentalism, terrorism and Islam. The party MEP (1999-2009) Mogens Camre drew a direct connection from men who commit rape, let their daughters be mutilated and force their wives to bear the veil to the terrorists from the World Trade Center, concluding that: 'they share a hatred which is induced by a sick ideology' (Camre quoted in Politiken 19-10-2001). On the same occasion, Camre asserted that Muslims in Western countries 'are only waiting until they are enough to remove us [in the written text to the press the words were 'to kill us'] – as in Sudan, Indonesia, Nigeria and the Balkans' (Camre: 2001). Camre's opinion was far from isolated and during that party meeting, several other members supported his position.

That Islam is incommensurable with Western liberal democracy is a standpoint that has become part of the Danish People's Party's ideology, in line with the increasing emphasis on culture, value and principles. There are several examples of this. In 2001, the party declared that Islam propagates 'medieval' ideas, which are fundamentally at odds with modern social values. As clearly expressed in the book 'Your land – your choice':

The Lutheran evangelist church is named in the Danish Constitution as the Danish people's church. In other words: Denmark is a Christian land. This is the first thing that has to be clear, before talking about religious freedom (...). The Danish People's Party thinks that the Islamic way of living is incompatible with the Danish and Christian way of thinking. In the same way, it is in conflict with the Danish way of thinking to accept male chauvinism, violent childrearing, division between sexes, arranged marriages, female mutilations, flogging and brain washing of small children (Dansk Folkeparti, Danmarks Fremtid 2001: 190).

Post-9/11, Pia Kjaersgaard denied that the confrontation represented a conflict between civilisations. For, as she put it in a speech at the Parliament opening, this would imply two civilisations and this was not the case because 'there is only one civilisation, and that is ours' (Kjaersgaard at the parliament opening speech 02-10-2001). This was a position emphasised by the Danish People's Party whenever a domestic or international event fuelled widespread generalisations about Islam and the Muslim community. However, in recent years the party ideology has followed new developments. The Danish People's Party has increasingly focused on the role of defender of Western fundamental rights and liberal values. The freedom of press and speech and the rights of ethnic minority women, in particular Muslim women, are only two of the issues which have increasingly engaged the party in recent years. Significantly, the party leadership has in about the same period asked party members to pay more attention to the distinction between Islam and Islamism. This separation seemed difficult to maintain, as some assertions of prominent members illustrate (cf. Søren Espersen quoted in Jyllands Posten 26-06-2007). However, several examples indicated that the party was working on a profile in which the general critique against Islam was replaced by specific issues which the party sees as contrasting with Western liberal values. Some of the main aspects of this ideological development will be traced below.

5.6.3 Towards the defence of liberal values: recent developments of the Danish People's Party's political agenda

As observed above, the agenda of the Danish People's Party has since 2001 focussed increasingly on the discourse of Islam and its incompatibility with liberal democratic values. This type of assimilation entails not only the wish, but also the ability, on the part of the immigrant, to absorb the values and principles characterising the host culture.

Assimilability, in turn, presupposes cultural commensurability with respect to the fundamental values that define Western Europe's cultural heritage. For the Danish People's Party, Muslim immigrants lack both the basic ability and the willingness necessary for assimilation, for the simple reason that Islam itself is considered almost entirely incompatible with the basic principles of Western civilisation.

The Danish People's Party very early placed the question of Islam's incompatibility with liberal democracy on the party agenda. Already in 2001, an article in the party paper maintained that Islam and democracy represented an 'impossible combination' (cf. Dansk Folkeblad 2001/2: 14-17). The position was again emphasised in the book *Danmarks Fremtid*

in the same year where Islam, unlike in Christianity, is presented as an illiberal and undemocratic faith, which gives no space to individual free will and where the Koran decides everything, from how the individual is supposed to live to how society is supposed to be organised (cf. Danmarks Fremtid 2001: 28).

However, a number of concrete issues have in recent years taken centre-stage in the policies and discourses of the Danish People's Party. It is issues which until recently have absolutely not been considered to 'belong' to the radical right agenda, including gender equality, free speech, liberal family values and the like. This development seems quite in contrast with the 'traditional' issues and concerns taken up by the radical right. Furthermore, it is difficult to relate these issues to the image of a materialist, authoritarian and traditionalist right described by most of the scholarly literature. Particularly in the new cleavage approach, which considers the new/authoritarian right a reaction to post-materialist and libertarian values and politics, the emphasis is rather on aspects of conservatism, traditionalism and authoritarianism in relation to the radical right ideology and agenda setting. Gender issues and free speech have never been considered to fit in the radical right profile and have rather been ascribed to the new libertarian left. Within this reading, the radical right was often considered a counter reaction and as such a transitory and rather peripheral phenomenon in relation to the new movements and political issues. In the words of Inglehart: 'an important phenomena – but not represent[ing] the wave of the future. On the contrary, (...) a reaction against broader trends that are moving faster than these societies can assimilate them' (Inglehart 1997: 251). This interpretation is in contrast with the efforts to champion liberal values, and particularly women's rights in Muslim culture that characterise parts of the radical right in recent years.

Clearly the approach to these issues is different than that of the post-materialist left. As Tjitske Akkerman (2005) has observed, it is a liberalism that is turned inward and driven by fear. The scholarly literature has underestimated the capacity of the radical right parties to transform and develop their agendas and perhaps to learn from the cultural change shaping the new dimension of political cleavage.

Early on, the Danish People's Party started to engage in what seemed to support basic rights to ethnic minority women and more specifically to Muslim women. Already in 1997, the Danish People's Party was among the promoters of a bill that wanted to prohibit female genital mutilation performed outside Denmark by ethnic minorities and to penalise it as a grievous bodily harm, even if committed abroad (see Dansk Folkeparti L65 1996). This issue was among the first related to women's rights and familial relations among ethnic minorities that the party dealt concretely with. The law was voted down by most of the left wing and by the Social Liberals in 1997, because 'a specifically targeted and preventive information effort in order to combat female genital mutilation was preferable' to a ban. A specific paragraph on female mutilation was included by the Danish People's Party in the 1997 policy agenda, where the party asked for harsher measures and punishment:

Female genital mutilations are prohibited by Danish law. Foreign citizens living in Denmark, who go abroad and get involved in the accomplishment of the mutilations must be punished and sent out of the country, when they return to Denmark. Has this person achieved Danish citizenship, it must be withdrawn (Dansk Folkeparti Principprogram 1997: 12).

In the following years, the Danish People's Party took the issue up to discussion again. The party claimed for example that also the imams supporting the practice of female mutilation had to be prosecuted, and children had to be removed from their families by the authorities (cf. Kjærsgaards ugebrev 11-11-2002). The practice of genital mutilation on little girls in particular of Somali origin was interpreted by the party as another sign of a mistaken asylum policy, which despite the 'billion of Danish kroner spent on teaching immigrants Danish and Danish democracy and legal tradition' looked more and more as a 'caricature of humanity'. Despite the clear problems determining the number of cases, the Danish People's Party insisted that female genital mutilation was a widespread practice among immigrants of African origin and in particular among Somalis, and proposed the compulsory medical examination of all school-aged children (cf. Kjærsgaards ugebrev 03-02-2003).

In 2003, a special paragraph was added to the Danish penal code making female genital mutilation a criminal offence. The law abolished the so-called principle of double punishment (*dobbelt strafbarhed*) in relation to genital mutilation and gave the Danish authorities the right to prosecute a Danish citizen or a foreigner living in Denmark also in cases where genital mutilation had taken place in a foreign country where it was not a crime.

By using examples of arranged and forced marriages, honour killings, female mutilations and the Muslim veil, the party wants to emphasise the condition of minority women living in a backward culture, whose rights – according to the party – have been manifestly disregarded in the name of multiculturalism and the multiethnic projects mainly supported by the left wing. In this regard, women's rights allow the party to bring several tensions into the open, particularly in Denmark and in the Nordic countries more generally, where gender equality is defended and widely implemented in society.

In 2002, reporting the murder of a Kurdish teenager by her own father because she had a Swedish boyfriend, Pia Kjærsgaard observed that the girl was a victim of the multicultural utopia still practiced in Sweden and whose consequences the Danish People's Party was trying to stop in Denmark. According to the party, multiculturalist and multiethnic experiments have again opened the doors to the Middle Ages, which the Danes '(...) had left behind centuries ago' (Dansk Folkeblad 2002/1: 2). Portraying Islam and the Muslim world as backward, still living in the Middle Ages has put emphasis on the assimilationist approach, since nothing from such a society can be accepted by the democratic Western world.

A few years later, Pia Kjærsgaard observed in one of her newsletters that nobody would have imagined only a hundred years ago that several Danish cities and towns would be crowded by people with 'a lower level of civilisation – with traditions brought from their home countries, such as honour killing, male chauvinism, halal slaughter – and vendettas'.

Yet, according to the leader of the Danish People's Party, this was exactly the case for Denmark. Denmark, which 'left the Middle Ages hundreds of years ago,' had become home to tens of thousands of people, who culturally and mentally 'live in the year 1005,' who had imported undemocratic and illiberal practices to Denmark, and who now tried to impose them on the Danish majority. A point in case is also the Muslim veil.

From 2001, the party put increasingly emphasis on a gendered portrayal of minority ethnic groups. Women are often described as 'oppressed' victims of their culture, wearing headscarves and subjected to discriminating practices, whereas Muslim young men are portrayed as arrogant and prone to violence. On the occasion of a demonstration on the main square in Copenhagen where Muslims gathered to hold a public Friday, Pia Kjærsgaard observed that: '(...) women had to stay at the very rear of the assembly – only men could come in front. In Danish we call it gender discrimination and we have no tradition for this in this land. (...) One thing is what Muslims do privately, but another is what takes place in public' (Kjærsgaards ugebrev 07-04-2003).

The Muslim veil is considered another visible symbol of Islam's refusal to accept some of the basic values and principles Western societies are built upon, for example gender equality. According to the party, if a Muslim woman living in the West decides to wear the headscarf this is because: 1) it is imposed by the authority of her husband or father; 2) it can be used as protection against sexual harassment and provocations by young Muslim men; 3) it is a visible religious symbol, signalling the wish to transform the society in the direction indicated by the Koran (cf. Kjærsgaards ugebrev 21-05-2007). To prohibit its use in the public administration is explained as a way to keep sexual discrimination out of Denmark and help Muslim women's emancipation, besides being a measure to avoid the Islamization of Danish society.

In more recent years, the debate about the Muslim headscarf has become even more heated. When a young Muslim woman wearing the headscarf ran for the 2007 parliamentary elections, the Danish People's Party again fuelled the issue, calling the headscarf a strong political symbol. In a parliamentary debate MP Søren Krarup went so far as to declare that 'the headscarf (...) is a symbol of tyranny and slavery' and that it must be considered equal to 'the swastika or the hammer and sickle' (Krarup in Nyhedsavisen 20-04-2007). The statement was supported by Pia Kjærsgaard, who argued that some women wear the headscarf as a 'provocative political symbol' (Kjærsgaard in Berlingske Tidende 19-04-2007).

The case of Asmaa Abdol Hamid opened up the debate about how to regulate concretely the use of the headscarf in the public administration. After the 2007 elections, the Parliamentary Board had to decide whether a politician wearing the Muslim headscarf could take part in parliamentary activities. There was no previous resolution in this sense, but the case in ques-

tion made it necessary.⁵⁸ The result was to allow female politicians to wear the headscarf when in Parliament. The Danish People's Party MP and member of the Presidium Søren Espersen, who had initially taken the issue up to discussion, called it 'a black day for democracy and equal opportunities', arguing that many were not aware the headscarf 'is not just a piece of cloth' (Espersen 8-04-2008), but a symbol of the Islamic uprising and a clear manifestation of the oppression of Muslim women.

Only a few weeks later the Board of the Court of Justice (*Domstolsstyrelsen*) decided that a judge can also wear the headscarf in court. The Danish People's Party expressed deep concern with this decision, arguing that the court should indeed avoid getting involved in politics and religion. In particular, as Pia Kjaersgaard put it, in a period when 'aggressive interpretations of Islam advance everywhere in the Western world and daily challenge the Western values of equality, liberty and democracy'. Pia Kjaersgaard underlined again the implications of gender, arguing that the Muslim headscarf 'divides women into two kinds (...) making it easier to distinguish the "honourable Muslim woman" from women who do not wear it and are therefore considered "for sale"' (Kjaersgaards ugebrev 28-04-2008). Significantly, the leader of the Danish People's Party expresses solidarity with Muslim women, accusing Muslim men of forcing them to bear the headscarf. In the words of Pia Kjaersgaard, if the Muslim man 'has not yet understood that the Middle Ages were over long time ago and that the premise for freedom and progress is women's equality, then it must be his and not the woman's problem, but the result is clearly visible in the impoverished and violent Middle East'.

But the Danish People's Party not only started to profile itself as defender of liberal values and principles in the field of gender equality and women rights among ethnic minorities. Other items such as freedom of expression, open-mindedness, tolerance, solidarity and diligence are today often mentioned as 'real Danish values' (Kjaersgaard quoted in *Dansk Folkeblad* 2007/5: 6-7) which ethnic minorities in Denmark should understand, respect and accept.

The publication of the twelve Mohammed cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten* in 2005 strengthened this position. On that occasion the freedom of speech and expression became *the* issue which the party rallied to explain the difference between the Western and Christian world and Islam. Christianity is described as tolerant, open-minded and open to critique and dialogue and Islam as a closed and intolerant religion. For the Danish People's Party the difference is that 'Christianity itself gives space to freedom – and Jesus came to Earth to be outraged' (Kjaersgaards ugebrev 5-12-2005), while Islam is against freedom of expression and democratic principles in general.

According to Pia Kjaersgaard, the main problem is that the West attracts people who are seeking material well-being, but who do not want to take 'the whole package' including 'democracy and the freedom to freely think and express oneself' (Kjaersgaards ugebrev 24-10-

⁵⁸ Asmaa Abdol Hamid was not voted into the Parliament, but she can be called in to substitute one of the MPs of the left-wing party *Enhedslisten* (The Unity List).

2005). In this sense, according to Kjærsgaard, many Muslims living in Denmark ‘have not yet understood what it means to be a citizen in Denmark’ (Kjærsgaard 17-10-2005). But if Muslims wish to live here, ‘they have to respect the [Danish] fundamental values, among them the freedom of expression’.

As regards the anti-immigration question, it is not only important to observe the nature and character of this issue, but almost as significantly to consider how this issue has developed and transformed in the ideology and agenda of the radical right. In this respect, the political influence and the position of responsibility that several radical right parties achieved in the course of the last decade can imply an effect on the way these explain their opposition to immigration. In the case of the Danish People’s Party, a different approach seems to characterise the party in relation to the discussion about specific conflicts on values such as gender equality, freedom of speech, solidarity, tolerance and the like. In the pages above, this has been interpreted as a new development in the way the Danish party approaches today the question of immigration.

5.7 AUTHORITARIANISM AND CONFORMIST VIEW OF THE WORLD

5.7.1 Law and order, authoritarian attitudes and traditionalism

Authoritarian attitudes are often associated with radical right parties. This reading is in some cases related to the fascist legacies of a number of Western European radical right parties, thus emphasising authoritarian appeals related to a particular vision of the social order based on a strong (corporatist) state and on a strong man leading the nation. However, as we have already seen (see Chapter 2), part of the recent scholarly research refers to authoritarianism as a value dimension, which contrasts and reacts against the rise and establishment of the libertarian values. In this view, libertarian values are broadly defined as emphasising ‘personal and political freedom, equality, tolerance of minorities and of those holding different opinions, openness to new ideas and new lifestyles, environmental protection and concern over quality of life issues, self indulgence and self actualisation’ (see Flanagan 1987: 1304). At the opposite, authoritarian values consist of such things as ‘security and order, (...) respect for authority, discipline and dutifulness, patriotism and intolerance for minorities, conformity to customs and support for traditional religious and moral values’ (Flanagan 1987: 1305). Even if rather broadly defined, these definitions give a more precise definition of the contents of the radical right authoritarian dimension. At this point it is interesting to see how *concretely* this dimension is dealt with by the Danish People’s Party ideology.

An important topic in the literature of the Danish People’s Party is law and order. Both the 1997 policy agenda and the 2001 working programme contain significant sections on law and order policies. In the 1997 policy agenda under the heading law and order (Princip Program 1997: 11-12), the party asked for a number of measures which clearly emphasised the need for increased security, discipline, control and punishment in society, among them a more

effective police force, harsher punishments against crime and a lowering of the criminal age from 15 to 12 years.

In 1998, the party launched the campaign *Security now! Violence out of Denmark* (see *Dansk Folkeblad* 1998/6: 1). With this initiative, the Danish People's Party wanted to emphasise that Denmark was no longer the peaceful and safe place it used to be, which several political parties still wanted people to believe. This situation called for some concrete measures, which the party presented and discussed in parliament in the following years (see Dansk Folkeparti B59 (1998)).

In the 2001 programme, law and order is considered of 'greatest importance in modern society', in view of 'increasing and more brutal crimes (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001). Immigrants are held responsible for higher crime rates than ethnic Danes. The party asked for ethnically grouped statistics on crime, which should differentiate also naturalised Danes from ethnic Danes. Furthermore, a foreigner police with specific functions of control of the activities of the foreigners living in the country, including smuggling, trafficking of women for prostitution and expulsions were among the priorities on the law and order issue from 1997. According to the party, immigrants who commit crimes should be expelled from the country (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001).

However, it is particularly after 2001 that the party started to emphasise immigrant crime, playing to popular concerns about the threat represented by the violent 'stranger in our midst'. The Danish People's Party's book from 2001 deals largely with the question of crime among ethnic minorities mentioning the costs and the consequences. A chapter quite significantly entitled 'Homicide, attempted murder, brutal violence and rape committed against Danes' (Danmarks fremtid 2001: 151-165), and reports in detail some of the cruelest crimes committed by immigrants from 1985. The date is not accidentally chosen, since it is the years just after the enactment of the immigration law of 1983, considered by the party as one of the most nefarious laws in Danish politics.

5.7.2 About family, children and sexuality

For the new cleavage hypothesis, the radical right authoritarianism is not limited to questions of law and order and zero tolerance, but it is a value and cultural reaction to open-mindedness and libertarian thinking, for example on family relations, religious attitudes and sexual norms.

The Danish People's Party considers the family as a unifying and fundamental social element in society. In the 1997 policy agenda, the family is defined as 'the core of the Danish society', which is strictly 'dependent on the conditions given to it' (Dansk Folkeparti Principprogram 1997: 12). In the 2001 programme, the family is again considered at the core of Danish society and the location of the relationships and affect where children first learn about the importance of societal values such as reciprocity and social responsibility (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001). The term 'family' refers primarily to the traditional married heterosexual couple with children. As specified in the programme: 'even if other family combina-

tions can give children a safe and good childhood, marriage continues to be the natural point of departure for family life and other ways of living together should not be favoured over married couples' (Dansk Folkeparti Arbejdsprogram 2001). However, compared to other radical right parties in Europe, the preference for married heterosexual couples does not result in a negation of rights to non-married or homosexuals⁵⁹; this is for example the case of the Northern League and other radical right parties in Europe. Nevertheless, the party is still very careful about discussing homosexuality. Søren Kraup has for example called homosexuals for handicapped 'because they do not fulfil the conditions of a marriage or of making a family. Therefore, they cannot expect to be considered at the same level in respect to this' (Kraup in Nyhedsavisen 26-04-2007).

Being the core and point of reference of the whole society, the family has to be able to bear these responsibilities and this task must be facilitated by the state through family policies supporting this core of the social organization. According to DF, the family and not the state is primarily responsible for the upbringing and education of children. The programme spells out that 'it is necessary to define the limits of how much society contributes to the upbringing'. The idea that society as a whole has to overtake a significant part of the caring and education of children is seen as both 'ideologically conditioned and worrying'. Public care must not 'substitute the natural link and network represented by family and friends' (Arbejdsprogram 2001); an idea that the party considers a socialist heritage, but it is the 'parents who bear the full responsibility for a child's conduct and behaviour until it comes of age' (Arbejdsprogram 2001). In this direction we can read also the party's acceptance of parents' right to inflict corporal punishment on their children as part of their upbringing methods. This was explained by Pia Kjærsgaard in a speech given in 1997:

The other day Parliament abolished with the majority of the votes the right to corporal punishment. Therefore it is no longer possible for parents to decide over their own children and to decide how to educate their children. Consequently, children have become state property. An outrageous socialist law, which has snuck through and passed without a public debate. (...) the Danish People's Party will not give up the claim that children's upbringing is of course the parents' responsibility – not the state's. As soon as we get some political influence in Parliament we will take the question up to discussion again (Kjærsgaard, Grundlovstale 1997).

Instead, the so-called declaration of integration (*integrationserklæring*) introduced in 2005, requires immigrants to, among other things, familiarise themselves with and sign a statement that in Denmark boys and girls have the same possibilities and that parents may not punish them physically.⁶⁰ The party accepted this as a fundamental element of the Danish culture.

⁵⁹ Until 2007 the Danish People's Party had an prominent MP who was declaredly lesbian.

⁶⁰ See:

http://www.nyidanmark.dk/resources.ashx/Resources/Blanketter/Ansoegningsskemaer/2007/fa1_ansoegningsskemaer_aegtefaellesammenfoering_endelig_230107.pdf (last accessed: 14-05-2008).

However, for the Danish People's Party the way children are brought up and educated in today's Denmark is often not good enough. In the introductory pages to the 2001 programme, for instance, one of the threats against the Danish society is considered the 'ineffective and ideologically biased upbringing and educational methods which has brought about an increasing lack of norms, so that many children and young people do not learn to respect other people, the understanding of other generations and the working moral' (Arbejdsprogram 2001). In this sense, a more rigid education and upbringing methods are considered necessary to prevent the general decay of the values and principles in contemporary Danish society.

5.8 FOREIGN POLITICS AND RELATIONS TO EU

5.8.1 The Progress Party on Europe

Until the beginning of the 1990s, the Progress Party was in favour of full Danish membership in the European Union. Particularly during in the 1970s and 1980s, the party underlined the importance of being part of the European project, warning against the problems that would come if Denmark was left outside. The party predicted that Denmark would become 'a peripheral area in the world economy' (Fremskridtsparti 1980). The Progress Party also had a provocative response, maintaining that 'the Danish economy and the Danish society are much better influenced by the European Union than by the politics from [the Danish Parliament]' (Fremskridtsparti 1980).

The positive attitude towards EU was strengthened by the belief that the European integration project would bring a general improvement in terms of the free movement of goods, labour and capital and these goals had also been endorsed by the popular referendum of 1972 on EU. The Progress Party's support to EU politics was therefore not unconditional, but based on the prerequisite that the European Union followed a liberal pro-market orientation that would not interfere with national politics.

The prospect that EU could evolve into a bureaucratic machine, with more legislation, common monetary policy and military power was put forward as a kind of threatening scenario. The party's position on EU was in fact due to change in the following years.

At the 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, the Progress Party supported the no-side. The party leadership explained this position arguing that the EU project had undergone dramatic transformations and that 'the original ideals of a free Europe with a free market a free trade and a reasonable individual freedom had slowly but surely been buried underground' (Fremskridtsparti 1992).

For the Progress Party, the European Union had started to represent everything the party was against in relation to public administration and bureaucracy: a centralised and bureaucratised power with an ever growing public sector. The development of EU was on its way to create an organ dictating the rules of the game and eroding the national sovereignty of the member countries, or as the party called it 'an intrusive supranational body' (quoted in Mudde 2007:

159). This was a view that would be later adopted and further developed by the Danish People's Party.

The Eurosceptical position of the Progress Party had matured in a changed historical situation, where the end of the Cold War had made much less concrete the risk that the country would end up at the periphery of Europe. Instead, the rule of thumb in relation to EU became to try to get as many benefits as possible from the EU membership and to sacrifice as little as possible. For the Progress Party, England was an exemplary model:

England managed to get through with much more of the country's wishes than Denmark. The two countries have otherwise always worked together against any sign of bad sovranational development of the European Union, but when it really mattered, the Danish government fell to its knees and said yes (Fremskridtsparti 1992).

It is worth noticing how the party in these years completely changed its position and started to emphasise national self-determination. The logic was inverted in relation to the past; because Denmark is a small country, its national interests must be protected and defended against the pressures from larger nations such as France and Germany. This was a significant transformation in the perception of the role of the country in the international arena and suggested the development that would be followed also by the Danish People's Party. Not surprisingly, the question of national sovereignty and the bureaucratisation of EU are today among the issues that the Danish People's Party uses to explain its opposition to the EU integration.

In the 1980s, the Progress Party also changed the position on foreign politics quite significantly. Questions involving aspects of national and international security started to get more weight in the programmes. This was somehow in contrast with the mocking attitude adopted by the party leadership in the past and which was blatantly epitomised by Mogens Glistrup's proposals to abolish the Danish military in favour of an automatic answering machine with a message in Russian: 'We surrender!'. It was in the same years that the party had withdrawal from NATO on the agenda (Fremskridtsparti 1973: 17). Quite in contrast with these demands, the party indicated that NATO was the only guarantor of military defence on the international level, while Europe, with its open borders and free movement of goods and people, was for synonymous with low national and international security.

5.8.2 The Euroscepticism of the Danish People's Party

Radical right parties have for the most part become very negative towards the process of European integration. But as we have seen above, it has not always been like this. Several of the radical right parties which today are among the most Eurosceptical were in the past overall positive towards EU. Considering the centrality that national culture, identity and national sovereignty are given in the radical right ideology, this is not surprising. But in reality, the radical right Euroscepticism emerged at different times in the different countries during the

1990s, when the integration process of the European Union started to accelerate both at the institutional and at the political level.

The Maastricht Treaty played an important role in spreading a strong scepticism, and even outright criticism, of the nature and development of the integration process. Several radical right parties started to change their minds on EU.

In Denmark, the population had already in the past voted on EU; in the 1972 referendum on membership to the European Common Market, and in 1986 on the Common Act. In 1992 the result was a 'small' no to the Maastricht Treaty and at that time the Progress Party supported the no-side. The Maastricht Treaty was accepted after a new referendum in 1993, which followed the so-called Edinburgh reservations, allowing Denmark to take a step back from cooperation on European integration in on four specific areas: a reservation on the final steps towards the European Monetary Union and the introduction of the euro, on defence policy and cooperation on juridical matters such as citizenship and asylum.

In 1995, the Danish People's Party continued the anti-European line started by the Progress Party in the early 1990s. For the Danish People's Party, Europe should only represent cooperation between 'free and independent countries' in a number of common fields (cf. 10-punkts program 1995), which maintained their sovereignty and national identity. To make the point, the party stressed the concept maintaining that 'there must be nothing above or besides the national Parliament' (Principprogram 1997: 7). The Danish People's Party did not reject Europe as such, but supported a model based on a confederation of a Europe of the nations, where European cooperation is limited to few specific policy fields such as free market, environment and international security. Core fields such as foreign policy, fiscal and monetary issues should never be decided at the EU level, because it would mean a loss of national sovereignty.

For questions of international military collaboration and defence Europe should neither challenge nor take the place of the existing NATO alliance. In line with the positions above, the Danish People's Party has from 1995 consistently opposed any further integration at the European level. The party is resolutely against the European Monetary Union. In 2000, the party campaign 'For the Crown and the Fatherland' was launched before the popular referendum to be held in March 2000, asking the population whether the country had to abandon the reservation on monetary policy and join the other Euro countries.

The party was resolutely against the introduction of the European currency and ran a campaign in which the crown was given a particular economic, but also a strong symbolic significance. With the words 'We know what we have, but we do not know what we get', the DF answered to what they considered the scare campaign of the government, about Denmark losing influence and economic power outside the European Monetary Union.

In 2001, the Danish People's Party was also actively engaged against the European integration process; this time represented by the implementation of the Schengen agreement, which in Denmark took effect on March 25 2001. To mark the occasion, the party decided to

buy the border station in the city of Saed, Southern Denmark, explaining that this act represented a way for a 'Danish minded (*dansksindet*) party' to contribute to 'the preservation of a piece of the Danish national border history' and for the second a concrete demonstration of 'the conviction that the Schengen convention is not going to hold' considering the pressure that the party saw would come from the illegal immigration into the country (*Dansk Folkeparti køber grænsen* in: Dansk Folkeblad 2001/1: 4).

The Danish People's Party is also strongly against the introduction of a European constitution, which for the party represents a serious and direct challenge against the Danish Constitution. Therefore, the party was very satisfied with the result of the French and the Dutch referenda that respectively in May and June 2005 rejected of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. In her newsletter, Pia Kjærsgaard commented that this should send the clear message 'to drop the EU state' and to throw the EU constitution 'in the garbage' (Dansk Folkeblad 2005/3:3). The party leader suggests a kind of 'return to the past' in EU policy:

The CEE-EU worked fine when it was a common market between sovereign and proud nations. But keep your hands off ideas and utopias. A community is doing best when there is respect for difference. The State of Europe is a sinking ship (Dansk Folkeblad 2005/3:3).

Looking at the way the party's EU policy has developed over time it is possible to distinguish different phases emerging partly from the progress of European integration, but also responding to the different conditions that characterised the Danish People's Party's political life course.

As mentioned above, what engaged the Danish People's Party on Europe was in particular an anti-integrationist position aimed at safeguarding national sovereignty. Parallel to this, the party ran a harsh critique against the political establishment, aimed at denouncing the democratic deficit behind the whole European integration process. For the party, the agenda and development of Europe are designed by the political elite in a process involving only politicians and public administrators, who do not listen to common people. The integration process is for the Danish People's Party something that the political elite wants to force through, even where people have clearly rejected it, because they think that they always know best. As Pia Kjærsgaard expressed this in 2003:

EU does not need new visions (...) the EU project has gone too far. It must be rolled back because it has come too far from what people wish. What the EU-elite in its Babel tower dreams (eating) at the restaurants in Brussels and Strasburg is one thing. What the old cultural Europe of the people wants is something else and much more down-to-earth (Kjærsgaards ugebrev 15-09-2003).

The party anti-establishment politics in relation to the European Union thus involves different levels. First, the party presented the European Parliament as an institutional organ both geographically and politically far from the Danish population. For this reason, in the 1995 and

1997 party programmes a point on the agenda suggested to limit considerably the power given to the European Parliament and preferably to eliminate it right away (cf. Dansk Folkeparti 10-punkts program 1995; Principprogram 1997: 7). The Council of Ministers should then remain the chief responsible organ and the Ministers the guarantors of the positions of the respective national Parliaments, considered more legitimate representatives of their people.

As a second point, the party blamed the Danish politicians for bowing to the power of Europe and for 'feeling ashamed of their people', who had said no to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. Being ashamed of the Danes' attitude towards EU is described by Pia Kjærsgaard as 'a contagious sickness among politicians in Parliament' (Pia Kjærsgaard in Dansk Folkeblad 1998/1:3). The charge of being ashamed of the Danish people associated Danish politicians with their colleagues in Brussels and thus made a distinction between the political elite and the people. Consequently, this put even more into relief the fact that the party was on the side of the people.

Until 2001 this kind of approach was helped by the fact that the party was in political opposition and a centre-left wing coalition led by the Social Democrat Poul Nyrup Rasmussen was in government. Furthermore, the fact that several other Western European countries were ruled by left-wing government coalitions was a way to emphasise that multiculturalists and the open borders to immigration was the policy of the EU and any attempt to oppose this project was considered illegitimate by the EU.

A case in point was the diplomatic sanctions imposed on Austria by the EU-14 in 2000, when the FPÖ entered office. Other initiatives were described as the effort of the political elite in Brussels to silence those with other political opinions and agendas. In 2000 *Dansk Folkeblad* ran an article: 'Big Brother Is Watching us...: EU's opinion police is brought into action against the Danish People's Party' (Dansk Folkeblad 2000/2: 8-9). For the Danish People's Party, the creation of a European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EMCR) was a clear political intimidation against parties with anti-immigration and EU scepticism on the agenda. For the party, the EMCR motto was: 'Today Austria – tomorrow Denmark', demonstrating that the EU strategy was to keep the critical parties away from any political influence by treating them as outcasts.

5.8.3 The Danish People's Party's Euroscepticism and the party political influence

During the period of consolidation of the party, the politics on EU have been both ideologically and strategically functional to the Danish People's Party; ideologically because they helped the party strengthen its national oriented profile and strategically by distinguishing it from the other parties and from the political establishment.

The position on EU politics has not registered sudden and radical changes since the party beginnings in the mid-1990s. On the contrary, the Danish People's Party has been rather consistent on this issue over the years. Apparently, coming close to the centre of the political power has not affected the Danish People's Party in terms of its Euroscepticism. This indi-

cates that the position on EU was something more than a mobilising issue taken up to construct identity and differentiate from the others when the party occupied a peripheral place in Danish politics (on such interpretative approach see e.g. Taggart 1998: 372; Sitter 2001). The Danish People's Party continued to emphasise its position against EU as a way to make clear that there was no change of course because the party had achieved political influence supporting a government of Euroenthusiasts. In this sense, the party's politics against EU allow the party to continue demarcating itself as an alternative to the political establishment on this issue.

Undoubtedly, the fact that the Danish People's Party is not part of the government coalition, facilitated the task. The party can vote against and criticise the way the Liberal-Conservative government deals with EU, without being considered problematic or contradictory. As mentioned above, this is one of the advantages that the DF has achieved by being influential without being in office.

The position against EU has thus continued to represent a platform from where to promote the role as guardian of Danish national sovereignty and at the same time to retain an anti-establishment profile that could be affected and weakened by the party's influential position in Danish politics. Another way the party used to promote itself was to 'market' Denmark as a model to be copied by other European countries in terms of the results achieved on immigration by means of a restrictive national immigration regime.

This way to promote the country was also legitimised by rising levels of cooperation and integration on immigration policies in the EU, particularly during the last decade, and towards which the party has always been very critical. However, the increasing focus on policies of migration control also at the European level (see Faist and Ette 2007) has been used by the Danish People's Party to demonstrate that Denmark was right on its political course, despite the critique from the European Union at that time. As observed by Peter Skaarup in 2002 before a European meeting in Sevilla:

What it was put to silence and lied about for decades, has now finally become a first priority on the EU political agenda. (...) Illegal immigration is now considered a problem. It took group rapes, honour killings and an attack in Manhattan before the EU leaders took this threat seriously. (...) But the good news that the EU governments apparently begin to take reality seriously, must always be considered with critical eyes, so that the situation is not used to sneak in even more centralisation and EU control through the back door. (...) Denmark can decide its own faith when it comes to immigration and asylum policy. The truth is that Denmark is now in front in terms of control of immigration politics (...) the Danish Prime Minister can come to Sevilla as a leader of a country which is in front, a country which as far as national politics is concerned has taken the bull by the horns. There is something to learn for the other countries (Skaarups ugebrev 17-06-2002).

5.8.4 Foreign policy, military and defence

On foreign policy and international issues the Danish People's Party has not been afraid to take a standpoint of its own. Since 2001, the party has been in line with the decisions of the

Liberal and Conservative government in the field of international military interventions. The party has been an important supporter of the participation of Denmark to the military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq.

As we have seen, the Progress Party already in the 1980s adopted a position in favour of NATO membership and cooperation with the US on national and international defence. The Danish People's Party maintained this position, preferring the Atlantic Alliance to European military and security cooperation. The party considers Europe politically too weak a construction to safeguard the interests and security of the member states against possible threats from unstable countries outside Europe (cf. Arbejdsprogram 2001).

Particularly from 2001, the Danish People's Party has been in favour of the interventionist wing, supporting the Liberal-Conservative government to keep the Danish military presence in both Afghanistan and Iraq. But this does not mean that the party has uncritically accepted all NATO decisions; for example, when in 1999 the Danish government supported the NATO intervention in Kosovo. At that time, the party described the conflict as an 'inverted crusade' (Dansk Folkeblad 2008/1: 24), arguing that the Danish military presence in the province helped Muslims win over Christians. For the party this was even more problematic because the region had an historically symbolic significance, being the place where the Christian Serbs fought the famous battle of the Blackbird Plain in 1389, in their effort to contain the advancement of the Ottoman Empire (Dansk Folkeblad 2008/1: 24).

The Danish People's Party's pro-NATO position dovetailed with the widely held positive attitude of the party towards the USA. Particularly after 9/11, the party considers the US one of Denmark's best allies, which can help the Western world against attacks from terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.

A similar logic is behind the party's pro-Israel position. The Danish People's Party is an outspoken supporter of Israel in the conflict with the Palestinians. In the course of the years the party has on several occasions demonstrated its 'solidarity with the Israeli people in their fight against Muslim terrorism' (Dansk Folkeblad 2002/5: 4). On this position the party is not alone and particularly in recent years several other radical right parties in Western Europe have adopted a similar position, although there are some exceptions like the FPÖ, which is declared critical towards the Israeli management of the conflict (see Chapter 7).

There are, however, still several differences among the radical right parties in relation to their position on foreign policy. As we will see in the next chapters, both the Freedom Party and the Northern League have been very critical of what the party leadership considered the American hegemony on Europe and the consumerist and multiethnic American society. However, the latter has after 9/11 revised this position, but not the FPÖ which is actually very explicitly against US foreign policy and favours the creation of a Palestinian state. On this issue, the positions of the Danish People's Party and the Austrian Freedom Party could not be more different.

Conclusions

When it was launched in 1995, the Danish People's Party had the opportunity to drop some of the ideological standpoints that had characterised the Progress Party and to develop policies that better fit the demands from the electorate. One of the first ideological transformations of the Danish People's Party in discontinuity with the past was the shift from the tax-protest profile developed by the Progress Party and the promotion of a pro-welfare image. This was increasingly implemented by the party and in particular after the party reached a position of political influence as a support party to the Liberal-Conservative government in 2001. The party's influence on the political forces in government, being formally still 'out of office', proved to be rather advantageous for the Danish People's Party. In this way, the party acquired a higher degree of freedom than it would have, if it had been directly involved in government. This position allowed the party to dissociate itself from decisions and resolutions of the government that were directly in conflict with its own politics, most notably on the EU, but also on other issues. It has also allowed the Danish People's Party to promote itself as a 'real protector of the traditional Social Democratic values and principles in relation to welfare', without making this avowal sound unfitting with a Liberal-Conservative government. However, as argued above, the results concretely achieved by the party in relation to the Danish welfare state are much more moderate than expected from a party that today asserts that 'real social democrats vote for the Danish People's Party'.

In any case, the party's pro-welfare orientation clearly questions what many scholars until recently considered a main feature of the electorally successful radical right: freemarketing and neo-liberal politics. Instead, it is rather protectionist positions on national economy, welfare state chauvinism and politics containing the effects of globalisation that came on the agenda of this party in relation to economic issues.

Undoubtedly, the development in this direction was influenced by the fact that the DPP voters turned out to be among the most supportive for 'classic' welfare arrangements compared to the electorate of other parties and in particular of the mainstream right. This has to be considered in relation to the socioeconomic profile of the Danish People's Party's electorate with a clear overrepresentation of working class voters (see Chapter 8) and which has made the DF the most clear cut working class party in Danish politics today. It is an electoral composition that has certainly influenced the party's decisions and politics on welfare state issues.

As for the value dimension, the Danish People's Party made anti-immigration a central issue. Complaints against immigration and against the politics approved by the governments in order to face the challenges had already characterised the politics of the Progress Party from about the mid-1980s. However, the Danish People's Party was able to take this issue up to discussion more effectively and concretely than the Progress Party.

The pages above suggested a development in the way the party has dealt with immigration over the years. While at the beginning the main concern was economic and social costs of immigration and crime and law and order, in recent years the Danish People's Party has fo-

cussed increasingly on nativism and on the cultural and value diversity and incompatibility of Western civilisation and Islam. This ideological development also suggests that in the Danish case the new political cleavages have actually become more and more relevant in shaping the political position of the party. By putting the emphasis on what the party claims are the fundamental libertarian values and principles of Denmark and more generally of the West, such as freedom of speech, tolerance, solidarity, industriousness and equal rights between men and women, the Danish People's Party has shifted the terms and paradigm with which the party explains its opposition against immigration from Muslim countries. The challenges and dangers that follow immigration are therefore not only explained in terms of economic and social costs for the Western societies, but as endangering the very foundations and principles on which the Western culture and identity are built.

6. THE NORTHERN LEAGUE: HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY

Introduction

Until recently, the Northern League was not considered a full-fledged member of the radical right, but rather an ethno-regionalist party with only few characteristics in common with other alleged radical right parties in Western Europe. This interpretation seemed endorsed by the party history, in which the demands of regional autonomy from the central government in Rome had played a major role in the politics of the Northern League until at least the end of the 1990s. Moreover, the Northern League was born and still is mainly a Northern Italian political and geographical phenomenon.

However, from the mid-1980s and particularly since the Northern League achieved government responsibility in 2001, the party has developed politics that went in the same direction chosen by other radical right parties in Western Europe. In particular, the similarities between the Northern League and parties such as the Danish People's Party and the Austrian Freedom Party, relate to the cultural and value dimension and to the ensuing politics. Most noticeably, the Northern League has in the Italian political system become the most clear cut anti-immigration party. A harder course against illegal immigration, effective repatriation programmes, no right for immigrants to vote and – significantly – a very negative approach to Islam clearly suggest a pattern of development similar to other radical right parties in Western Europe. These parties' anti-immigration politics are perhaps the most evident similarity, but not the only one. As it will emerge in this chapter, political convergence is seen in other political fields as well, for instance EU policy, where there is a general agreement to frame the EU integration process in the context of competences and responsibilities of the local community and the national space versus the challenges of global and sovranational realities. However, on other issues the Northern League continues to hold specific positions that are related to and of course influenced by the party history, development and electoral support. As we will see, it is especially on the traditional economic dimension that we still find the most obvious differences between the three parties compared in this study. How the politics and positions of the Northern League have changed and taken shape through the years is part of an interesting account that can help us understand several aspects of the present condition of this party, also in comparative terms.

The chapter starts by considering the history and ideological development of the party, from its origins in the mid-1980s until the more recent present. This background allows us to observe the way the Northern League developed in relation to the different opportunities that emerged over the years and to the different phases of the party's life. It started as a party with a very limited geographical and political significance and ended with political influence and government responsibility. As argued in the case of the Danish People's Party, the recent political standing of a party is not without history and this is often important to understand the process and conditions of the party ideological and political development.

The remaining part of the chapter engages in a closer analysis of the ideology of the Northern League, which follows the main ideological dimension and issues indicated in the previous chapters and which helped structure the analysis of the Danish People's Party in Chapter 5. This allows closer comparative observations of the differences and similarity in the policies and positions that characterise the Northern League in relation to the other two parties.

6.1 HISTORY

6.1.1 *The rise of the phenomenon of the Leagues in Northern Italy in the 1980s*

The Northern League was born as an ethno-regionalists movement in the 1980s, when a wave of regionalist and autonomist movements entered Italian politics. This gave rise to cultural and political realities that achieved significant electoral support in the late 1980s, particularly in the North of the country.

The claims for more regional autonomy and self-government were not new to Italian history. Especially in the border regions, local community and identity had often clashed with feelings of national belonging and respect for state institutions. The formation of the nation state had partly contributed to this, resulting from a process that came mainly from above, whereas feelings of national belonging were still weak among the population.

In the course of the 20th century, the diverse regionalist and autonomist demands were contained by the fascist regime, which controlled and held down any form of localist or regionalist demand that could endanger the integrity of the nation. After WWII these demands re-emerged and through the years new opportunities for the rise of new parties were created. At the same time, the secularization of Italian society triggered important changes in the voters' political consciousness and affiliation, particularly in some areas of the North, where Catholicism had been coupled to the vote for the Christian Democrats (*Democrazia Cristiana*, DC).

The DC's dominant position started to change in the 1980s and new political realities gained electoral support, for example the Venetian League (*Liga Veneta*). The Venetian League was a movement founded during the 1980s and its politics and interests were embedded in the local reality represented in this case by the Italian North Eastern region of Veneto. This explains why the main focus of the Venetian League was initially on cultural and linguistic aspects, for example official recognition of the Venetian dialect as a specific ethnic and linguistic reality and the demand for a higher degree of decisional power and economic autonomy from the centre (cf. Gold 2003: 79-81).

In 1983 the Venetian League got about 4 pct. of the votes, which entitled it to two parliamentary seats, one in the Deputy Chamber and one in the Senate. It was a remarkable result for a new ethno-regionalist movement, which encouraged the emergence of similar regionalist claims in other parts of Italy. In fact, while the Venetian League was consolidating its experi-

ence in Veneto, another regionalist reality was born in the Italian Northwestern region Lombardia.

In 1982, Umberto Bossi, who is still leader of the Northern League, and a few close friends launched the Lombard (Autonomist) League (*Lega Autonomista Lombarda*), which was the precursor to the Northern League. The name was accurately chosen to recall the history of the towns and villages that in the 12th century had banded together to fight the occupation by Frederick I Barbarossa, King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor. To represent the Lombard League, the party founders opted for the sword-wearing warrior Alberto da Giusano, a popular hero who is believed to have historically led the league to victory over Barbarossa's troops at the Battle of Legnano in 1176. These historical events and actors were used by the newly formed Lombard League to symbolize the revolt of the 'peoples' of the North against the powerful and centralizing forces that in the past were represented by the German and Roman Empire and in present times by the Italian government in Rome.

Initially, the League's political agenda did not differ much from the issues and questions developed by other Italian ethno-regionalist parties. The main goal was primarily to safeguard the ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage of the region and to achieve a higher degree of regional autonomy from Rome (cf. Lombardia Autonomista 1982). The Leagues' agenda represented a 'return' to the opposition between the periphery/local against the urban interest and the centre of the political power. The revival of this opposition reloaded a socio-political cleavage whose effects on Italian politics and society seemed at that time to have exhausted their strength (e.g. Tarchi 2003: 136). These oppositions also emerged in the electoral profile of the Leagues, whose electoral core came from minor urban centres, provincial towns and communities of the Italian Northeast and Northwest (see Diamanti 1993). However, it was unlikely that this electoral support indicated symptoms of marginalization and decline in face of the socioeconomic transformations of the 1980s. The phenomenon of the Leagues was rather the product of affluent regions and relatively strong socioeconomic realities that in many respects were ready to tackle the consequences and challenges brought about by globalization and by the increasing internationalization of the markets.

The Leagues and later the Northern League did particularly well in geographical and socioeconomic contexts that in the 1980s had experienced a positive and dynamic process of industrialization and economic growth. Largely based on small and medium scale industries and firms, several regions of North and Central Italy developed a number of important productive industrial districts during the 1980s. These are territorially and geographically delimited areas where industries and firms often worked in the same productive sector and specialized in different phases of the production (for example the chair industry in the Northwestern region Friuli Venezia-Giulia). The majority of these industrial districts flourished particularly

in the North of the country.⁶¹ To give an idea of this development, in the North East of Italy, with a population of about 10 million residents, there were in 2001 about 42 different industrial districts, whereas the Northwest of the country, with a population of about 15 million, had 39 industrial districts and 49 were located in Central Italy. In comparison to this development, the South, with only 26 such districts, had great difficulties catching up with the flourishing industrial and economic development in the North; an economic difficulty emerging at other levels, such as income levels and employment rates.⁶²

The industrial activity and the social and economic affluence in the North of Italy, together with the social and political events characterising the country in those years, contributed to the formation and consolidation of specific forms of identity and belonging, strengthened by the fact that many shared common working experiences in the same field of production. Feelings of localism, individualism and sense of belonging to a shared community and a Protestant work ethic were successfully interpreted by the political and cultural phenomenon of the ethno-regional leagues. They tried to maximize them, highlighting the distinctiveness of the place, the uniqueness of the cultural and linguistic regional tradition and the successful economic growth of the region. All this was put in contrast to the situation in the rest of the country and particularly in the South (see e.g. Diamanti 1993).

The leagues were also able to give voice to widespread resentment against the state and the political establishment, considered to hinder the private initiative and the economic growth of the North and to feed the increasing costs of the public sector, particularly in the unproductive South. By taking these issues up, the Lombard League was able to promote itself as a movement in opposition, with completely antithetical values and principles that clearly contrasted with the negative image embodied by the political establishment and its elite (on this cf. Chapter 9).

The Lombard League pointed to the Italian political establishment as the main responsible for a national debt that in the early 1990s had reached 117 pct. of the Italian GDP.⁶³ Particularly in the productive regions of the North, the idea that their money was used to ‘maintain’ the South and an inefficient and corrupt political elite became widespread among voters, and fuelled their distrust in politicians and in the political system at large. To this the Lombard League attached a direct critique against Southern Italians, who considered moving North only to take advantage of the favourable conditions created for them by the national and local political establishment. The Lombard League was the first political organization that mobilised the electorate on the North and South question. In the 1980s the party declared that

⁶¹ See in: ISTAT (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica), 8° censimento generale dell’industria e dei servizi, p. 29, 2001, in: http://www.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non_calendario/20051216_00/Volume_Distretti.pdf (last accessed 13-08-2008).

⁶² In 2007, the unemployment rate for Italy was about 6 pct., but showing important geographical differences, with 3.8 pct. in the North, 6.1 pct. in Central Italy and 11.8 pct. in the South. ISTAT, *Rilevazione sulle forze di lavoro. IV trimestre 2007*, in: <http://www.expobg.it/downloaddoc/OccupazioneIstat2007.pdf> (last accessed 13-08-2008).

⁶³ The Italian public debt was in 2007 about 104 pct. of GDP.

the labour and housing markets in the North were privileging the newcomers instead of helping native Lombards. Although resentment and stereotyping of Italians from the South were not new among segments of the population in the North, the Lombard League translated them into a clear political issue based on hard tones and demanding politics that put Lombard natives first when it came to employment opportunities in the public sector and benefits on the housing market. The party did the same with the immigration question, putting into clear words the anti-immigration position, which later would become a central issue on the political agenda. This was initially based on the same premises: the socioeconomic costs of immigration and its negative consequences for the regional development and wealth.

The Northern League was launched at the beginning of the 1990s as a result of the experience of several different regional leagues. The political breakthrough and support to the phenomenon of the leagues in the 1980s represented an important event and an essential step towards understanding what the Northern League has become today.

6.1.2 From the leagues to the League: the phase of organization and consolidation

At the European election of 1989, the Lombard League, the Venetian League and a number of other minor leagues and regional political realities gathered for the first time in a unitary list, obtaining significant electoral support. At the following administrative elections in 1990, the Lombard League achieved important results in Lombardy and in other regions of the North, confirming this positive electoral trend. In February 1991, the Lombard League, the Venetian League and four minor regional parties (*Lega Emiliano-Romagnola*, *Alleanza Toscana*, *Unione Ligure* and *Piemont Autonomista*) formed a new political party organization called the Northern League.

At the party first federal congress, Umberto Bossi was elected party secretary. This position allowed the newly constituted Northern League a highly centralized structure and top-steered leadership. Bossi achieved the undisputable role of charismatic party leader with exceptional powers that political commentators have on more than one occasion effectively summarized in the sentence: ‘Bossi is the League, the League is Bossi’.

In the case of the three parties here considered there is little doubt about the leading role of Umberto Bossi in the Northern League, Pia Kjørsgaard in the Danish People’s Party and Jörg Haider in his years as leader of the Austrian Freedom Party. They have great communication skills, an anti-elitist stance sometimes supported by their ordinary background (Bossi and Kjørsgaard) and in general their ease in the position of undisputed party leaders.

However, as already observed for the Danish People’s Party (see Chapter 5), giving the party leader greater decisional power over the members was also a way to prevent escalation of internal conflicts and divisions. This role and power was particularly significant for new political organizations such as the Northern League and the Danish People’s Party, but also for the Austrian Freedom Party, with a longer party history, but like the other two involved in a phase of radical transformations and consolidation strategy at the end of the 1980s.

During the 1990s, most of the exclusions decided by the Northern League leadership were explained as necessary to prevent party members from betraying the aim and goals of the League by getting too involved in promoting their own interests and career. This was also a way for the Northern League to emphasize that the party was still different from the other political organizations, even if it was gaining increasing political influence and decisional power. As Bossi (1992: 84-85) once formulated it:

the League is not an ordinary party. I believe that our movement expresses the desires and hopes of many people of the North and of all those looking for freedom, respect for traditions and justice against the unfairness of the power. Those who join the League must have solid ideals and must be ready for personal sacrifice (...) there is no place for those looking for a position and for personal rewards. There is no place for those selling our federalist cause for easy money.

Statements like this allowed the Northern League to keep a profile as an alternative political force, contrasting with the highly corrupt and incompetent political establishment. A party made of 'strong and pure souls' that did not give in to political selfishness and personal interests. As part of the same strategy, the Northern League leadership described the party as a popular movement, whose existence had emerged directly from the needs and demands of a popular base that has grown increasingly disenchanted with the political establishment. These feelings were not new to the Italian electorate, but the Northern League was the party that managed most effectively to capitalize them.

6.1.3 Tangentopoli and the anti-establishment politics of the Northern League

At the beginning of the 1990s, a number of political corruption and bribery scandals jeopardized the whole Italian political system. What was later defined as the *Tangentopoli* (Bribe Town) affair, was a real turning point in Italian post-war politics. The so-called Clean-Hands (*Mani Pulite*) trials that took place in Milan during the 1990s showed that the phenomenon went even beyond the worst case scenario. Several prominent Italian politicians were involved in illicit financing and corruption. These events took place only a few years after the dramatic transformations in Italian politics provoked by the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, symbolically marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and by the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The Italian political scenario had been rather stable since the post-war period. This was based on what an Italian scholar once defined the 'imperfect bipartitism' (Galli 1967), referring to the political configuration that characterized the country with the Christian Democrats (DC) in power and the Communist Party (PCI) in opposition. In the years of the Iron Curtain, the DC had benefitted electorally from acting as a bulwark against communism, while the Socialist Party (PSI), the third biggest party in Italy at that time, had been electorally favoured by the lack of realistic chances that the PCI had to govern. The international events in 1989

put an end to this situation. The voters no longer saw DC's position in government as inevitable and reconsidered the role of the party.

Tangentopoli amplified the discontent and political distrust that was already widespread among the electorate. Unsurprisingly, at the 1992 parliamentary election most of the mainstream parties registered a drop in electoral support. For the first time in decades, the DC got less than 30 pct. of the votes, while several of the party's traditional constituencies in the North voted for the Northern League. The League achieved about 9 pct. of the votes at the national level and 55 seats in parliament, obtaining solid representation in national politics. But most remarkably, the League became the first political organization in several regions of the North (cf. Table 1.4, Chapter 1). The party achieved 23 pct. of the votes in Lombardy, and managed to surpass 15 pct. in Veneto, Piedmont and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia. The support to the party in the North was then confirmed in June 1993 at the administrative elections where the Northern League won in a number of significant municipalities and most remarkably in Milan, where the new mayor, Marco Formentini, was a Northern League man.

Undoubtedly, the anti-establishment politics advanced by the Northern League appealed to the part of the electorate that was strongly dissatisfied with how politics worked in general and had very little trust in politicians and institutions. The feelings of resentment against the institutions, the political establishment and particularly against what in Italy is often referred to as 'the Italian political class' were nothing new. Several classical studies portray the Italians as citizens with a low interest in politics and who are much more proud of being Italians because of the artistic and architectural beauties of the country rather of the Italian political system and how this works.

The roots of the political distrust were already produced by the sociopolitical and economic development of the country before and after its unification (Putnam 1993). But political corruption, clientelism and bad political culture increased the distrust among the voters. The Italian political literature is rich in studies dealing with the degree of corruption and personal interests among politicians (cf. for example the recent book by Stella 2007).

This situation influenced the opportunities for the vote for the Northern League. The party not only profiled itself as a clear political alternative to the status quo, but also as a political force that would safeguard the interests of the medium and small entrepreneurs that strongly contributed to the economic growth in the North of the country. It was the battle against 'the parasitic and clientelist capital in Rome' and 'the capital of economy in Milan'. The fact that the party was relatively new and that it had never been in office was another positive argument for the voters' support. In the 1990s the Northern League was moving steadily from the margins to the mainstream of Italian politics.

6.1.4 The Northern League at its first government experience

A popular referendum in 1993 overwhelmingly supported the introduction of more plurality in the Italian party system. This was translated into a new electoral law approved in 1994. As

a result of this law, 75 pct. of the deputies in parliament were elected in a first-past-the-post system, and the remaining 25 pct. on a proportional basis.

In order to stop the proliferation of smaller parties, the law also introduced an electoral threshold at 4 pct., which the parties had to cross in order to win seats on the proportional basis. However, a result below the threshold would not prevent a party from entering parliament, if it was part of one of the coalitions running for the government. This electoral reform was a first step towards the establishment of a bipolar and majoritarian political system. It forced the parties to form two major coalitions respectively at the centre left and centre right of the political space.⁶⁴

Facing the potential losses that would result from running alone, the Northern League decided somehow reluctantly, but out of necessity, to join the coalition led for the first time by Silvio Berlusconi. The entrepreneur and media magnate Berlusconi had entered politics in 1993, in a political situation that was still shattered by the events of *Tangentopoli*, where voters were strongly dissatisfied and disillusioned about politics and the Northern League was not always seen as an appealing and reliable alternative, particularly in the South. When Berlusconi entered politics, he emphasized his political debut more as a necessary act, as a personal sacrifice to safeguard the interest of the country, rather than an interest in active politics (see Tarchi 2003: 164-65).

Berlusconi's party *Forza Italia* was a new political organization, whose politics and populist appeals were soon competing with the Northern League. The two parties struggled over the same electoral segments and this resulted in a contradictory political relationship of 'love and hate' between the two. *Forza Italia* was moreover advantaged by the fact that its appeal went beyond the electorate of the North, and had good chances in the rest of the country. However, the Northern League leadership understood that in order to leave the margins and achieve political influence, the party had to accept a political coalition with Berlusconi. Bossi encouraged his people to 'hold their nose' adding that 'to give in to something' meant also to 'receive something back' (Bossi in *Il Corriere* 28-02-1994).

At the March 1994 elections, the Northern League got 8 pct. of the votes at the national level, but reached about 22 pct. of the votes in Lombardy and in Veneto, and maintained a good position in other Northern constituencies. A few months later, the party was for the first time in office with *Forza Italia*, *Alleanza Nazionale* and a few other minor parties from the split-up of the former DC.

But the party's first government experience did not last long. In the few months (April-December 1994) the party was in government in the centre-right coalition, a significant part of the Northern League's electorate went over to *Forza Italia*. Already from the beginning the Northern League disagreed with the line chosen by the other coalition partners. Deep dissatisfaction was expressed with Berlusconi's decision to run the elections together with the party

⁶⁴ On the electoral laws in Italy see Pasquino, *I sistemi elettorali*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2006.

MSI-AN. AN has significantly transformed itself during the last fifteen years, but for decades the party, under the name of Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) represented the traditional extreme right with roots in post-war fascism (cf. Ignazi 1989; 1994; Tarchi 2003).

Before the 1994 parliamentary elections, FI presented a separate coalition with AN in the Centre and South of Italy called *Polo per il buongoverno* (Pole for the good government). Bossi considered this a political betrayal, emphasizing that the Northern League had more than once clearly stated that the party would never get together with the fascists (see Scaliati 2006). As Bossi put it in his speech at the party congress in February 1994:

We, the Northern League, are the extension of the liberation movement that struggled for liberty: the Northern League will never make a political agreement with the MSI, with the fascists, or whatever they now call themselves. Never with the fascists!

As the Progress Party in Denmark, the Northern League was in the 1990s promoting a profile connecting the party to the anti-fascist liberation movement that during WWII and particularly in the final phases had played a crucial role in the battle against the Italian fascist and German Nazi troops. These historical events explain why the electoral support to the MSI and later to AN has always been stronger in the Centre and South of the country than in the Northern regions, where the liberation movement was stronger and anti-fascism remained a widespread value, particularly among the generations that had experienced the war; this also when the MSI officially changed its name to Alleanza Nazionale. In the years that followed AN distanced itself from the fascist ideology and its leadership has intensively worked to place the party in the traditional and conservative right wing camp.

The Northern League's position on Alleanza Nazionale was due to change in the 1990s. Even if the two parties have never really come to like one another, they ran together in the following elections, in the same coalition from 2001 until 2007 and again in 2008 – they were in office together. In this sense, government responsibility changed significantly the position of the Northern League in this respect. On the whole, the party's office seeking politics was not painless and required careful evaluation of the consequences of a change in politics in order to enter and remain in office.

But the challenging task for the Northern League was to become mainstream and at the same time hold on to those features that had given the party the profile of alternative to the establishment. From being mainly a regionalist, territorially based party of protest and opposition, the Northern League had developed into a government party with a traditional political organization and with decision-making influence at the national level. This 'passage' from the margins to the mainstream was part of a political strategy that strived to achieve political influence. As Umberto Bossi (1996: 80) explained:

the League is not a temporary movement, in the sense that it will dissolve when the federalist construction is realized. The League (...) is becoming a new political actor which represents a

secure investment in the future and which is ready to interpret the dynamic political demands of the voters.

This was also a way to make clear that the Northern League was not a flash party, but a reliable political actor with a clear programme and plans for the future. The political agreement with Berlusconi gave the Northern League considerable power. The Northern League got 117 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 60 in the Senate, five influential ministries, three with portfolio (Interior, Industry and Finance) and two without (European Union Affairs and Institutional Reforms). But the government had a very short life and already in December 1994, only seven months after its formation, a vote of no-confidence and the Northern League's withdrawal from government put an end to its first government experience (cf. Bossi 1996: 85).

Disagreement emerged in particular in the political relationship between the Northern League and Forza Italia. The Northern League was not only losing voters to Forza Italia, it was also difficult to be in government without becoming unpopular. An example was a bill presented by the Minister of Justice to limit the use of preventive detention to suspects of terrorism and mafia activity, thus affecting the investigations of political corruption. The bill, which was later nicknamed the 'save the thief bill' (*decreto salva ladri*), was considered a way to avoid that Silvio Berlusconi would get involved in the investigations on illegal financing to political parties by a team of judges in Milan (*pool Mani Pulite*). The immediate protest of the civic society prevented the enactment of the bill into law, but this cast a shadow on the government parties, in particular on the Northern League, which had insisted on its role of watchdog against the irresponsibility and corruption of the political establishment.

Seen in a broader perspective, the direct engagement of the Northern League in government politics made it more difficult for the party to uphold a 'clean' profile. Moreover, the position of responsibility had shifted the LN away from its original role of non-cooperation and anti-establishment.

The party was also unable to counterbalance the negative effects of being in government by keeping its promises on for instance federalism, which during the electoral campaign was promoted as the most important issue if the party managed to get in office. But no relevant steps were taken in this direction during the brief period the Northern League was in government.

The pragmatism that characterized the party in its first government experience endangered the political and ideological profile of the Northern League in the electorate. The poor results in the European elections of May 1994 were interpreted as a clear sign of the electoral decline. The Northern League got just above 6 pct. of the votes and sent only six members to the European Parliament in Brussels, where they joined the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party.

In December 1994, the party decided to withdraw its support to the government coalition. This provoked turmoil in the coalition and within the party. The other government parties considered this a political betrayal that made the Northern League an untrustworthy partner. Also within the party a number of MPs disapproved of the leadership's decision and left the Northern League to join Forza Italia.

The result of this first government experience was deterioration rather than an improvement of the party's position (cf. Diamanti 1996). This meant that also the League's attempt to promote itself as a new moderate and centre party had failed. However, the withdrawal from government in 1994 was a way to stop the great losses of party members and voters. By December 1994, about one third of the Northern MPs had already left the party to join FI and the Northern League had to recuperate. To do this the party returned to a vote seeking strategy at the margins, where it remained until the end of the 1990s.

6.1.5 Back to the political periphery: the Northern League's differentiation strategy at the margins of Italian politics (1995-1997)

With its return to the margins of Italian politics the Northern League's ideology and politics became more radical. At the federal congress of September 1996, the Northern League proclaimed officially the independence and sovereignty of the Padanian state (cf. Lega Nord, *Padania o Roma* 1998), which the party defined an 'irreversible and definitive act' that derived from the impossibility to 'reform the state in a genuine federalist direction', as this would mean to 'destroy it and to build a new one starting from zero'. According to the Northern League, the only alternative was to 'come out, to separate from this state and make another one' in order to save the economy, liberty and culture of the peoples of the North (Lega Nord, *Padania o Roma* 1998: 11)

The radicalization of the party on the issue of federalism provoked a new phase of peripheralization from 1995 until about 1997. The Italian scholar and Northern League expert Ilvo Diamanti (Diamanti 1996: 73) has appropriately defined this period of the party characterized by the 'independence as a form of differentiation strategy'. After the negative experience in government and the difficulties created by the competition with Forza Italia to gain the voters' support, the Northern League needed to find a strategy that could help the party to re-establish its profile of a clear alternative to the mainstream parties. In this prospect, Padanian independence was also a strategy to make clear distinctions between the Northern League and the rest of the political establishment. Within this framework the leadership spoke about a 'movement of liberation', whose politics were neither left nor right, or as Bossi formulated it once: 'the League (...) is the centre. It is in the centre and above, to be more precise' (Bossi 1996: 105).

The Northern League wanted to reach all voters and therefore did not take a clear political standpoint after its experience in government. In spring 1996, the party ran alone at the parliamentary elections, which significantly reduced the number of parliamentary mandates

because of the rules introduced by the electoral law of 1993, which supported the development of a bipolar system. However, although potentially inconvenient, this decision seemed to give the party a more credible position in light of the more radical orientation the party had taken.

The strategy gave positive results and in 1996 the Northern League achieved over 10 pct. of the votes at the national level, reaching peaks above 20 pct. in some constituencies of the North. The decision to run alone prevented the centre-right coalition *La Casa della Libertà* to get the necessary votes to win the elections. Berlusconi commented this result at the congress of Forza Italia in 1999 pronouncing the famous words: ‘together with the League we can win, without the League we lose’ – and this, even if several of the members of FI had little sympathy for the Northern League after the political ‘betrayal’ in 1994.

In 1995, the Northern League continued its project to create a Padanian state. The party created its own ‘shadow’ parliament in the Northern city of Mantova, called the Parliament of the Northern People (Bossi 1996: 109). While waiting for the official creation of the Padanian state, the function of the Parliament of the North was to discuss and vote laws and bills that the party MPs had to present to the Parliament in Rome. This was part of the project for the construction of ‘parallel structures of government and mobilization at all levels’, which had to prepare and get ready to rule the new Padanian state. In the months after the 1996 elections, new controversial organs were formed by the League. The Parliament of the North appointed a committee to write the new Padanian Constitution. The ‘Padanian nation’ also had its own flag (a flower with six petals on a white background called the Sun of the Alps) and its own National Guard, better known as the ‘Green-Shirts’, to maintain security and order. The party leadership reassured that the secession had nothing to do with violence and weapons, but would take place peacefully, even if Bossi’s belligerent remarks often seemed in contradiction with this spirit.

The construction of the Padanian identity represented an important step in the process of creating an independent and sovereign Padanian state. The Northern League worked actively in those years to legitimize this project, by creating the necessary symbols, myths, history and events. This can be easily traced in the party rhetoric, as suggested by the way Bossi (1996: 164) started to speak about the Padanian nation:

The new nation is a newborn child with the heart in Mantova, the head in Venice and the spine along the *Po* river. Its blood is the men and women who have reached their national awareness, who feel deep-rooted in the European Community and who are resolute to fight for their rights, as they have sworn in *Pontida*, where the Padanian soul lays.

A yearly event acquired particular significance: the party meetings at Pontida, where Umberto Bossi, prominent party party and party sympathisers gather on the river Po and declare their loyalty to the party and to the Padanian cause (Lega Nord, Cronistoria: 9). During what is comparable to a pagan ceremony, a sample of the river’s water is collected to be poured again

into the Venetian Laguna, where the party leadership, supporters and sympathizers meet again a few weeks later.

The pagan celebration symbolized the pact of unity among the Padanian peoples. These events have never really had a significant mobilization effect, being frequented almost exclusively by the party's most loyal voters and supporters. However, they attracted media and the public attention, particularly when the party was again at the politic periphery.

The independence initiatives and claims of the Northern League provoked reactions and concerns of the institutions and of the public opinion, which looked at this new phase of radicalization with feelings varying between fear, scorn and veiled support. This re-awakening of the questions of independence and ethnic claims also brought the party back to regionalist and independence questions, characterizing other regionalist and separatist movements in Europe, such as the Catalans and Basques in Spain.

In May 1997, the League launched a referendum for Padania's independence asking to vote yes or no to the question: 'Do you want Padania to become an independent and sovereign federal republic?' Later, party sources declared that the result was an overwhelming yes from those who had voted in one of the electoral gazebos that the party had put up in the main cities of the North. A survey commissioned by the Italian political review *Limes* just before the elections in 1996 showed that the public opinion on the independence of the North gave a less consensual result. Asked about what the 'independence of the North' represented for them, 35 pct. of the interviewed declared that it was an unacceptable hypothesis, 29 pct. that it was a favourable prospect but on the whole not possible and only 23 pct. found it a favourable and desirable prospect (cf. Gold 2003: 105-106). Even if more than half of the respondents were open to the idea separating the North of Italy from the South, most of them considered this an impracticable if not impossible project to realize. This implied that it would be very difficult for the Northern League to find the necessary support and popular backup for the realization of the Padanian independence.

In the same years, the centre-left government coalition understood the need to make reforms in a federalist direction, answering to a demand that came primarily from the North of the country. In 1997 a nonpartisan bicameral committee was created to realize some reforms in this direction. The so-called Bassanini law represented an attempt to give regional and local administrations more decisional power (see Legge n. 59 1997) in education, health care, industrial incentives, urban planning, public works and the environment. The law introduced the simplification of the administrative system and a reduction in the number of government ministries.

The initiatives taken by the centre-left government 1997-1998 threatened the Northern League's ownership of the federalist issue (see Gold 2003). According to other scholars (e.g. Diamanti 1998), the leadership of the Northern League understood that the support to the party in the North would hardly become a movement strong enough to carry out the separation from the South. Furthermore, the legitimization of Northern secession as a necessary

measure to join the European Monetary Union in 1999 disappeared when Italy was finally accepted in the EMU in 1997.

Life at the margins no longer offered great opportunities. At the end of 1997, it was clear to the leadership of the Northern League that the party had to change if it wanted to achieve political influence and get into government again. Significantly in this sense is the perspective adopted by the Northern League leadership at the federal congress of October 1998. The speeches by the party leadership indicated that the party was moving towards another phase of political normalization and office seeking politics and considered the Padanian nation difficult – if not impossible – to realize. Umberto Bossi said at the congress (Bossi, Congresso federale Lega Nord, 25 ottobre 1998):

I am sorry that I was not able to realize concretely the Padanian Federal Republic. But nobody could do it in such a short time and following democratic methods. We must build with what we have, even if the others have much more than us. We are not afraid of them, we can tackle them. But we must be more afraid of our mistakes, our crises of trust and our internal divisions. (...) In Rome we will do the political opposition being at government, by making laws that can penalize the North much less than now. This Congress has not made peace with Rome, on the contrary, it declared the total war against it by sending Padanian troops inside the government structure of the centralized state.

In an attempt to avoid being politically isolated and marginalized, the League had already in 1997 started to make careful approaches to the two main political coalitions in Italian politics. These attempts were initially contradictory, since it was not clear which of the two coalitions the League was getting closer to. The party was still afraid to lose voters to Forza Italia, as it happened in the administrative elections of May 1998.

By 1999 it was also clear that no significant results could be achieved by the party by running alone. At the elections for the European Parliament in June, the League lost electoral support. The party got 4.5 pct. of the votes and only four MEPs, who joined the Technical Group of Independents (until its dissolution in 2001), which included parties like the French Front National, the Vlaams Blok and the Italian Radical Party.⁶⁵

In 1999 and 2000 the party focussed less on the Padanian question and increased its political engagement and activity on other issues. Immigration again became a central issue, and the party criticized in particular the new immigration law approved by the centre-left government in 1998, best known as the Turco-Napolitano Law and seen as an attempt to transform Italy into a multiethnic and multicultural society. The party denounced the rights and guarantees that the law gave the new immigrants in terms of healthcare, welfare benefits, education and housing. At the beginning of 1999 the party started to collect signatures demanding a

⁶⁵ Following the 2004 election the Northern League joined the Eurosceptical group Independence and Democracy, from which the party was suspended in 2006, because one of its members wore a t-shirt with one of the Danish Mohammed cartoons on. The party joined later the Union for Europe of the Nations, of which the Danish People's Party was also a member until 2009. At present both parties have joined the right wing Eurosceptic group Europe of Freedom and Democracy that was formed after the European election in 2009.

popular referendum to repeal the law. Within few months, about 700,000 had already signed, but the Constitutional Court decided against a referendum.

In the same months the party tried to mobilise public opinion by organizing a demonstration in Milan against ‘drugs, prostitution and illegal migration’. Speaking to the people at the demonstration, Umberto Bossi indicated the immigration regime in the country as the result of an ‘exact political design, that of globalization (...)’ and in which the ‘US would like to colonize Europe by creating a multiracial society’. At the time, the Northern League considered the US as the worse case in relation to cultural homogenization and multiethnic/racial social experiments (see below). This anti-US position changed in 2001, largely following the events of 9/11 and in relation to foreign policy after 2001 and involving participation by Italy in Afghanistan and in Iraq, both approved when the Northern League was in office again.

Another issue that from 2000 increasingly engaged the party leadership was the question of Islam and the Muslim minority in the Italian society. This issue was not new to the Northern League, but in these years the party increasingly adopted identity and anti-Islamic positions as central themes in the discussion about how to preserve cultural difference and safeguard the values and principles embedded in the Western and Christian civilization. As observed by Betz (2009):

Initially founded to bring about the ‘liberation’ of the prosperous northern provinces of Italy from the rest of the country – and particularly Rome, the Lega Nord increasingly adopted questions of identity and immigration as central issues. In this context, the party tried to promote itself not only as the defender of western values but also of Christianity, in an effort to appeal to practicing catholic voters, particularly in the northeastern part of the country.

The Northern League started to give voice to those who were worried about how the Italian society would develop in the future if the number of immigrants with a Muslims background continued to increase (see below).

At the same time the party adjusted its approach on economics, maintaining a moderate neo-liberal position demanding less public intervention. But one of the main questions in the party’s economic policy remained the reform of the state. As we will see below, this was no longer formulated in terms of secessionist demands, but had been translated into a demand for a devolution system, giving the regions more decisional and fiscal autonomy in fields such as the school and the healthcare system.

At the regional elections of April 2000, the Northern League decided to rejoin the centre-right coalition. Umberto Bossi (2000) explained this decision as follows:

In 1994 the agreement between us [the Northern League] and Berlusconi was improvised and there was no precise political programme. Today everything has been planned in detail. There is a project in which also the deadlines have been precisely scheduled. The agreement is not based on convenience but aims to change the country.

At the same time, Bossi criticised the centre-left coalition for its ‘conservatism’ in relation to the federalist reform of the state and in particular for the pro-immigrant position which, according to Bossi, supported a multiracial and ‘mondialist’ vision of the world, which was in direct contrast with the Northern League’s positions.

At the 2000 regional election, the centre-right coalition together with the Northern League made a comeback in several northern regional constituencies, implying an electoral decline for the centre-left. Following the bad electoral results, Prime Minister Massimo D’Alema decided to resign and was followed by Giuliano Amato, who led the country until May 2001, when new parliamentary elections were held. In 2001, the Northern League was in office for the second time; again as part of the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi.

6.1.6 The Northern League in government again (2001-2006)

At the parliamentary election of May 2001 the support to the Northern League showed a decline also in the party traditional Northern Italian strongholds, where the electoral support used to be strongest.⁶⁶ At the national level the party went from about 10 pct. of the votes to only 3.9 pct. (cf. Table 1.4, Chapter 1). Umberto Bossi (quoted in *Cronistoria della Lega*, 2001) commented on the result observing that:

Was there perhaps another way? If we run alone we would certainly get more votes, but it was like putting them in the refrigerator [*li avremmo lasciati in frigorifero*]! Either we could get more and change nothing or get little and make a difference! (...) We have paid too much, but we hope that this sacrifice has not been in vain.

The Northern League came to parliament with a weaker electoral mandate and fewer deputies than in 1996. However, the 2001 elections gave the party relevant political influence due to the electoral law rewarding the parties in the winning coalition. The Northern League achieved three important ministerial posts: the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Services and the newly established Ministry for the Institutional Reforms and Devolution, which had to implement the federalist reform of the state and was assigned to the party leader Umberto Bossi.

The government position again exposed the party to the risks of entering office and gaining government responsibility and political influence. As discussed above, this experience had failed in 1994. Experience showed that it was easier for the party to emphasize its role of political alternative to the establishment while in opposition. This seemed to support the interpretation that the process of normalization coming with government responsibility can turn the radical right party’s strength in opposition into disadvantages when the party gets into office (see Heinisch 2003). Therefore, the Northern League’s attempt to regain power with the

⁶⁶ In the North-West the Northern League went from 21.8 pct. of the votes in 1996 to 9.5 pct. in 2001. In the North-East from 26.2 pct. in 1996 to 9 pct. in 2001.

centre right coalition 'required striking a difficult balance between being a party of government and a movement of opposition' (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2005: 953).

The Northern League had to retain and strengthen the core support of the Northern provincial heartland, and at the same time appeal to the voters who had left the party to join Forza Italia in the 1990s. The strategy was first of all to consolidate its position by showing that the party was a reliable political actor. This was particularly important if it wanted to reach the more moderate and pragmatic electorate that still remembered its betrayal in 1994. To reassure these segments, the Northern League signed before the elections an official agreement with Berlusconi promising a rapid approval of the federalist reform in return for enduring and solid support from the party to the coalition.

The second time in government, the Northern League was undoubtedly the most faithful partner in the coalition. The party moderated its critique against the other partners in the coalition, in particular Alleanza Nazionale. This moderation became evident also in the way the party referred to Silvio Berlusconi; from being portrayed as the bad guy using his position to safeguard his economic interests, he turned into the self-made man that could guarantee the necessary structural reforms of the state, giving regions more autonomy from the centre. Devolution, rather than fiscal federalism became a frequent buzzword in the Northern League leadership to indicate the priority of the party on economic matters.

While in government, the party participated actively in the decision making process. A new immigration law, Law no. 189, was rapidly approved already in July 2002, better known as the Bossi and Fini law, which introduced stricter rules on immigration and harsher measures against irregular and illegal immigration. In the same period, the equation between terrorism, Islam and immigration became one of the central themes in the party's public discourses, showing a similarity with the development of the politics in several other radical right parties in Western Europe.

9/11 made the anti-immigration issue even more pertinent in terms of national security and anti-Islamic positions, emphasizing the dangers that immigration, particularly from Muslim countries, represented for the national identity and the survival of the West. Several scholars agree that the Northern League was becoming more radical, appearing even more 'in a league of its own' (cf. Albertazzi & Mc Donnell 2003). Particularly on cultural and value issues the party went through a process of radicalization, becoming increasingly sceptical not just of immigration and its cultural and social impact on the Italian society, but also on issues such as abortion, homosexuality and religious freedom.

In this (new) phase of government responsibility, the Northern League definitively abandoned the secessionist project, focussing on the reform of the state in the direction of more legislative, economic and administrative power to the regions. In 2001, the parliament approved a constitutional reform that gave the individual regions more legislative power. In 2005 the government followed up, presenting to the parliament a bill with a vast plan of reform that would ensure the regions full control in the health sector, in education and in mat-

ters of public order and security. The bill included a reform of the functions and number of members in the Deputy Chamber and Senate, the empowerment of the role and position of the Prime Minister and a general redefinition of appointment and functions of organs such as the Constitutional Court and of the High Court. The bill gave rise to an intense parliamentary and public debate. When it was approved in parliament, the opposition together with other actors attained the numbers and conditions for a popular referendum, which was held in June 2005. About 62 pct. of the voters rejected the reforms. The regions Lombardy and Veneto voted yes, showing once more the electoral closeness of these areas to the economic policy promoted by the Northern League.

As we will see, the Northern League has maintained direct continuity with the past concerning the neo-liberal orientation on economic matters. The demands for lower taxes, less government involvement in the economy, a more efficient public administration and better conditions for the small and medium entrepreneurs remained on the agenda. In this respect, the position of the Northern League on economic issues matched the support that the party continued to get from the self-employed (see Chapter 8 and 9). Unlike the Danish People's Party and the Austrian Freedom Party, the Northern League has not (or at least not yet) become a clear cut working class party, although an increasing number of manual workers has started to vote for the party. Nonetheless, significant electoral support still comes from the medium and small entrepreneurs, clearly influencing the party's overall position on economics. An analysis of the position of the Northern League voters on relevant economic issues indicates that the voters have a clear neo-liberal orientation on several economic issues. Northern League voters want less government intervention in the economy, privatization of the healthcare system and more freedom for firms to hire and fire workers. This positioning is very close to and at times even more neo-liberal than the declared liberal position of Forza Italia.

In the years in government (2001-2006), the Northern League also distinguished itself on its foreign policy and relations to the EU. It radically changed position from a pro-EU approach, which characterised the party until at least 1997, to EU scepticism distinguishing the present approach of the party on the EU integration politics (see below).

6.2 NEO-LIBERALISM AND TAXES

6.2.1 Neo-liberal politics, federalism and taxes

During the 1990s, the Northern League developed a federalist project that essentially replaced the demands for regional autonomy advanced in the years when the 'many' different leagues still were mainly a regionalist phenomenon sharing only few political and programmatic interests. The decision to launch the Northern League in the early 1990s suggested finding a broader frame to the party's socioeconomic demands.

In the 1990s, the Northern League proposed a federalist development based on the definition of three macro-regions (North, Central and South Italy) which would become new

powerful and specialized productive centres and agencies for the collection and administration of the taxes.⁶⁷ The party saw fiscal federalism as the only effective solution to the centralization of the economic and political power in the hands of a clientelist and corrupt political establishment. It was also expected to help solve the problem of the unjustifiable costs of the public administration and the increasing public deficit that was putting Italy's entrance in the Euro area at risk.

A macro-regional agency was therefore to be placed at the top of a so-called five-stream system, taking care of the economic balance between income and expenditure. This solution would allocate a quota to finance spending for the Federal State, the European Union and to social and welfare costs such as pensions, contributions to the local municipalities in economic need and the payment of the public debt (cf. Lega Nord 1994).

The fiscal federalism represented the Northern League's 'Trojan horse' on socioeconomic matters. Opposite pairs such as efficient/inefficient, rigid/flexible; complicated/minimal; expensive/cost-effective were often used in the 1994 and 1996 policy agendas, to make clear the difference between the bureaucratic and centralized nation state controlled by the political establishment versus the well-functioning and productive solution represented by the macro-regional federalism proposed by the Northern League.

The federalist solution was a key element in a broader context of socioeconomic politics in which a neo-liberal orientation prevailed. The aim of the Northern League was clearly to create a lean state characterized by less bureaucracy and more efficiency. The party suggested 'more market and less State', also to solve a number of national economic problems, first of all unemployment. Privatization of state owned enterprises and agencies and closure of the unproductive ones were to be considered in the same framework. Other measures included a general simplification of the legislation and of the bureaucracy, lower income taxes (a ceiling of 30 pct. on income taxes and 25 pct. on enterprises), economic and legislative measures helping in particular the small and medium-scale enterprises.

The medium and small scale firms were the backbone of the Italian economic upturn in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in the northwest and north east, which just at the turn of the century and until the beginning of the 1970s were hit by economic decline and high rates of emigration. It was in the same regions (Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia) that the development of small firms responded to the economic crisis of the large scale industries that came in the late 1970s and 1980s. The crisis of the industrial sector was largely the result of the development of the global market and increasing international competition, which forced

⁶⁷ Gianfranco Miglio became the inspiring scholar and intellectual behind the federalist position of the Northern League. Miglio, who was elected to the Senate as independent in 1990 on the Lombardy League-Northern League list, was one of the most important intellectuals in the party promoting the federalist project. According to Miglio, also European politics had to change from a Europe of the national states into a Europe of the regions. Miglio left the Northern League in 1994, in protest of the leadership's approach to the federalist cause (cf. Miglio 1994).

companies to decentralize their production and rely increasingly on subcontracting and cheap labour in the developing economies of Eastern Europe and in South Eastern Asia.

Medium and small scale firms had emerged and flourished in this rapidly changing social and economic context, having flexible structures that could be easily adjusted to market conditions and changing consumer patterns. Previously unknown geographical areas of the North and Central Italy became specialized industrial districts producing and exporting nationally and internationally. Often territorially delimited and clustered by sector, these districts facilitated the creation of forms of identity and belonging that often had as a common denominator involvement in the same local and working community and a Protestant work ethic. These communities and in particular their units, represented by the small and medium – particularly family driven – enterprises started to represent in the rhetoric and politics of the Northern League the place of the fundamental values characterising the Padanian people: ‘industriousness, initiative, obstinacy, straightforwardness and the ability to face the challenges of globalization without losing touch with the local roots’⁶⁸ (Biorcio 1997: 176).

Until the mid 1990s, small entrepreneurs, artisans, self-employed and manual workers were overrepresented in the electorate of the Northern League (see Diamanti 1993, see also here chapter 8). This partly explains the attention the Northern League programmes of those years dedicated to policies aimed at helping the small and medium enterprises in a situation of increasing globalization and de-industrialization of the advanced capitalist countries. For the Northern League, big business and big capital threatened the interests of the local communities and their identity, primarily because these forces are considered to promote a multiethnic/multiracial society in favour of the private profit and the economic interests of the few. As underlined by Bossi (1996: 35):

Compared to the small and medium companies and to the arts and craft which are the only real carrying structures of the ‘Made in Italy’ today, we have to recognise that big capital has squandered, through major political compromises, the largest economic resources, keeping the small and medium companies on short rations (...) and the small and medium companies are the major predestined victims of the unsuccessful financial politics of this political regime.

In the late 1990s, the Northern League saw national economic and financial processes and dynamics in the broader framework of globalization/mondialization. For the party these words indicated the development of a society, where the rules of the market forces and the laws of profit defeated the interests of the community and the nation. The worst possible example in the documents of the Northern League, at least up to 2001, was represented by the United States, a model of the conflictualities and differences of a multicultural and multiethnic experiment. This had been then further worsened by the damages produced by what the Northern League called the ‘McDonaldization’ of American society.

⁶⁸ It is interesting that some of the same values are today underlined by the Danish People’s Party in relation to Danish society (see Chapter 5).

Another important issue on the agenda of the Lombard League in the 1980s and 1990s was taxes. Because of the higher productivity and affluence of Northern Italy in relation to the South, the party claimed that 'the outcome of the work and taxes of the Lombards should be controlled and disposed by the Lombards' and not used to finance the unproductivity of the South and the public deficit created by the political establishment. The status of the Italian North as 'producer' was put in contrast with the 'dependent and unproductive' South. A party manifesto illustrated this by portraying the Lombardy region as a hen laying golden eggs for a fat matron that represented the government in Rome.

In the past, the Northern League also triggered tax protest actions; the party electorate was referred to in the 1990s as the 'people of the fiscal protest'. However, as Biorcio (1997) has observed, the tax protest issue was used by the party more as a vote maximising strategy, rather than as an instrument to obtain concrete results. The party has maintained tax protest on the agenda because of its continued appeal to some segments of the society, particularly in the North and among the medium and small private entrepreneurs and the self-employed. As we will see in Chapter 8, it is still among these groups that the Northern League receives its electoral support.

6.3 ANTI-IMMIGRATION

The emergence of anti-immigration in the League's ideology can be dated back to the late 1980s. There is no direct reference to immigration in the early manifestoes of the Lombard League. However, in the second half of the 1980s an increasing number of migrants began to arrive in the country, particularly from North Africa and Albania. In Lombardy, the number of immigrants went from about 50,000 in 1986 to about 160,000 in 1990. Today the region still has a high percentage of immigrants. The rapid increase of the immigrant presence in the region fuelled anti-immigration grievances among the population, which the Lombard League was prompt to take up and which the Northern League since developed.

The discourse about non-EU and non-Western immigrants (*immigrati extracomunitari*) developed around three main themes (cf. also Biorcio 1997: 150): 1) the economic and social costs of immigration (housing problems, uncertainties in the labour market, criminality, social benefits and so forth); 2) the need to defend the ethnic and cultural identity against people of non-western origins; and 3) the attack against the political, economic and religious establishment via support to the development of a multicultural and multiethnic society.

Particularly at the beginning, the anti-immigration rhetoric used argumentations similar to those employed by the Lombard League to explain why the party was against the arrival of Italians from the South; both were considered to take houses and jobs from the local Lombards, to burden the economy and to represent a foreign element to the ethnic and cultural identity of the host community. Therefore, slogans like 'Lombardy for Lombards!' were in those years addressed both to Southern Italians and to migrants in general.

Later in the 1990s, anti- question became one of the Northern League's central issues, whereas its position on internal migration from the Southern regions gradually lost importance and remained on the party agenda only in terms of a general critique of public spending in the Italian South and against the region's difficulties starting a process of development and productivity, that the party considered favoured by a complacent political establishment. Starting with the approval of the so called Martelli Law⁶⁹ (Law 39/1990) on immigration in 1990, the Lombard League first and the Northern League afterwards strongly criticised the immigration policy enacted by different Italian governments in those years, accusing them of allowing an unrestricted immigration flow and trying to create a multiracial and multicultural society. In 1998, a new immigration law, the Turco-Napolitano Law (Law 40/1998), met equal opposition from the Northern League. In 2002 the Northern League, in government with the centre-right coalition, approved the Bossi-Fini Law (Law 189/2002), which tightened the rules and terms of immigration to the country significantly.

In recent years, the Northern League has increasingly focussed on cultural and value questions in relation to immigration. Immigration is not only considered in terms of the economic and social costs and problems of increased crime and prostitution, but has also acquired a cultural and value perspective, which particularly in relation to Islam underlines the difficulties – if not impossible attempt – to combine its principles and values with those characterising the Christian and Western societies. The different stages of development of the anti-immigration question in the politics of the Northern League will be traced below.

6.3.1 From the Southern question to anti-immigration in the politics of the League

The Lombard League was in the late 1980s very negative towards the government's immigration policy, and in particular towards the impact of immigrants of non-Western and non-European origin on society as a whole, but particularly in Lombardy. This position was often expressed by emphasising the massive economic and social costs of immigration on the local communities, but also the fact that the newcomers were carriers of a foreign way of life, contrasting with what the League considered the honest and civic values characterising the societies of the North.

Because of these positions, the League early on had to reply to charges of racism and intolerance from the political establishment and from parts of the public opinion and the mass media (cf. Bossi & Vimercati 1992: 141-150; 1998: 11-18). The party has always rejected these charges and according to Umberto Bossi, 'if there is a concept which is radically alien to the Padanian people and particularly to the politics of the League, this is racism' (Bossi & Vimercati 1998: 13).

⁶⁹ It is common in Italy to give a law the surname of the Minister or Ministers who contributed to design it and make it approved. The member of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) Claudio Martelli was vicepresident in the Chamber of Deputies in 1989 and later Minister of Justice.

In the League's official documents there is no space for explanations based on racial or biological differences. Rather, the Northern League emphasises, besides the concrete economic impact and the problems of law and order coming with immigration, aspects of cultural and value differences (cf. also Biorcio 1997). These have also acquired increasing attention in the party ideology across the years. Particularly since the late 1990s, the Northern League has approached the positions developed and expressed by the Western European radical right.

As mentioned, the Lombard League was primarily concerned about the costs of immigration in terms of social benefits, housing and law and order. It was a situation that the members of the Lombard League considered damaging in particular for the native Lombards, whose needs always ended up at the bottom of the list. The discourse referred to non-European immigrants as well as Italians from the South who had moved up North already in the late 1960s and 1970s, when the rapid industrialization demanded labour.

Within this perspective, internal migration and immigration from other countries was initially mainly considered a socioeconomic problem for the regions of the North. The League made little distinction between the Southern Italians and non-European immigrants. The main concern those years was what the party interpreted as unfair bypassing of the local population in favour of foreigners that was accomplished by the state, which preferred the latter in the allocation of benefits, employment in the public sector and housing. The party paper *Lombardia Autonomista* published articles entitled 'A homeless is worth less than an immigrant' (Lombardia Autonomista 1982), or 'Colonial school, enough!', which attacked what the party considered the diffuse practice of employing Southern Italians in the public sector in the North, instead of Northern natives (Lombardia Autonomista 1996).

In the first programme of the Lombard League dated 1983, stronger regional autonomy in a federal state form was among the first issues mentioned, immediately followed by the need to strengthen and defend the Lombard 'culture, history and language' and the common 'social and moral values' against every threat to the Lombard 'national identity' (Lega Lombarda, Programma 1983). The party demanded concrete measures, for example that 'the Lombards must be given priority when looking for jobs, housing, care and social benefits' as well as in 'the public administration and in the schools'. These statements introduced a position that would be later fully exploited by the Northern League and which dealt with what the party considered the less deserving groups in society. For the Northern League, Southern Italians as well as immigrants from the developing world were unjustly favoured in the allocation of social benefits, houses and public employments. According to the party, 'Lombardy' was 'no longer for the Lombards' and '*la Padania*'⁷⁰ no longer belonged to the 'Padanian people'

⁷⁰ In a geographical sense, Padania refers to the valley of the Po river in Northern Italy. The term is rarely used, as the terms *pianura Padana* or *Val Padana* are preferred in geography textbooks and atlases. In politics it was introduced by the League.

(Lombardia Autonomista, 1982). This should be enough for the people of Lombardy to react against the situation independently from any ideological and political belief. As a pamphlet in the party paper *Lombardia Autonomista* (in Lombardia Autonomista 1982) directly encouraged:

Lombards! It does not matter how old you are, what kind of job you have and what political orientation: what matters is that you are – we are – all Lombards. This is the most important thing and time has come to recall this by giving it a political concreteness.

The only way to safeguard the local and regional interests was to support a political actor with deep roots in the territory and in the community. This represented a first attempt to brush away differences based on social class and religion and to construct a political belonging based primarily on the ethnic community, the place and the local identity. It was something that everybody could relate to, albeit with a different perception of how and to what extent. The Lombard League and later the Northern League were able to put these feelings of belonging into words and to strengthen them by insisting on regional and local aspects that made people who were born and grew up in the same regional reality concretely feel more similar to each other and therefore more different from all those coming from outside.

In this view, cultural difference was accepted as long as the differences were confined within their respective spaces and allowed only very limited forms of permanent exchange. As Bossi (Bossi & Vimercati 1998: 14-15) clearly put it:

Make a note of this: I – like all the other leaguers [leghisti] who are worthy to be called this – am not capable of racial hatred. For me all men are equal, in the sense that they have equal dignity. The blackest of the blacks has the same rights as my neighbour; but where he comes from. Among his rights is not to hinder our people to live as such, respecting our rules. It is not only an economic problem, here the point is to stop globalization and to avoid that everything becomes commodified and reified. Men are reduced to the same thing, *homo oeconomicus*, without soul and identity. With the alibi of racism the most unbearable things are allowed, as the right of peoples to defend their identity and the duty of other peoples to (...) be their own masters, but elsewhere, in their homes [*padroni a casa propria*].

Bossi's words seem to resume the dual aspect of what at that stage was the party's anti-immigration position: from one side legitimated by the right to 'cultural self-defence', from the other explained by the need to avoid a situation as that of Italians who 'after a life of work' got 'from the state an insignificant sum of money, while a Roma receives 1 million lire every month, that is double the amount of a minimum pension' (Bossi 1998: 15).

In the following years, the League became increasingly critical of the way the political establishment handled immigration policy. Particularly during the 1990s, the party – under the form of the Northern League – continued to frame the anti-immigration position within the context of increasing globalization and internationalization of the world, which produced mainly negative effects on the unity and identity of local communities. In the effort to save

them, the Northern League was against immigration and against what the party referred to as the ‘mondialisation’ of contemporary societies.

6.3.2 *The Northern League and anti-immigration in the 1990s*

As in several other Western European countries, immigration flows to Italy increased rapidly during the 1990s. In the attempt to deal with immigration and asylum, the parliament passed the first comprehensive law on the issue (Law no. 39/1990) with a huge majority in February 1990. The Communist Party, then the main opposition party, also voted in favour, whereas the then Republican Party, AN and the Northern League voted against.

The 1990 Law, also called Legge Martelli, after the then Vice President of the Council of Ministers, provided the first specific set of laws regulating the foreigners’ entry and permanence in the country. The main purpose of the law was to limit the number of immigrants to Italy, augmenting the control and measures against those entering illegally. The law was also an attempt to bring Italy in line with other signatories of the EU Schengen Treaty, by giving immigrants who were already on Italian soil, but who had entered illegally, the opportunity to regularize their position in the country. The 1990 Law confirmed equal access to social rights, but little money was actually allocated to this aim in the national budget (see Zincone 2006: 21). This was one of the reasons why the League was strongly against it.

In 1990, Umberto Bossi, elected as only senator for the Lombard League, presented no less than 108 amendments to the law in an attempt to prevent, or delay, approval of the law (cf. Biorcio 1997: 152). The Northern League argued that although the law was restrictive in some respects, it was still too soft on immigration, because it allowed undocumented workers in the country to be regularised and because it gave immigrants access to some of the same social and welfare rights accorded to Italian citizens (e.g. housing, health care and education). The party started a campaign against the law in *Lombardia Autonomista* to collect 50,000 signatures to repeal the law, but the initiative failed.

According to the League, it capital rather than the labour force had to move; non-EU citizens needed to be helped at home. A slogan of the League said: ‘To take the blacks into our country is a form of slavery’. As later explained in the 1994 Northern League programme: ‘the word solidarity in reality covered a massive introduction of labour quotas on the market that applied a form of “inverted colonialism” in favour of a few and with relevant social costs to be paid by the society’ (Lega Nord, *Lavoro ed immigrazione extracomunitaria*, 1994: 14). The Northern League suggested stopping the immigration flow and eventually to introduce quotas of needed labour to be let into the country (Bossi 1998: 145-146):

Immigration in Italy is today a completely independent variable in relation to the productive system. The League’s proposals aim to reconstruct this link. How? It is simple: applying new and much stricter rules than those suggested in the Martelli law (...) Those asking to come into the country to work will not be let in if they cannot exhibit a signed contract issued by the entrepreneur that wants to employ them.

The Northern League could in fact not ignore that some industrial sectors in the country and particularly in the affluent industrial districts in the North needed labour and that this demand could not be satisfied without immigrant labour. This implied that segments of the Northern League electoral base, consisting of small and medium private entrepreneurs and self-employed were becoming more positive on immigration.

The party found a way to answer these needs by supporting an immigration model that opened up to severely controlled quotas of immigrant labour. An immigrant's entry into the country for working reasons would be regulated by a previous contractual agreement between employer and employee (cf. Bossi & Vimercati 1992: 146). Any other form of immigration (for instance for tourist reasons or family visits) had to be severely regulated and controlled by the Italian authorities.

By the end of 1995, a new Decree Law (cf. Decreto legge nr. 489 1995), also known as the Dini decree, regulated the legal status of immigrants in Italy. It was approved under the transitional and 'technical' government created after the fall of the first Berlusconi government (1994-1995). The Decree did not repeal, but considerably amended the previous law and contributed to further regulation of the immigration flows particularly on matters concerning the employment of seasonal workers. But the decree law also extended access to most public health services to illegal immigrants and access for their children to the school system.

This decree law was reiterated several times in 1996 and followed by other temporary regulations in immigration (cf. ISMU 2005: 47). This until 1997, when the emergency situation required turning a decree into law regulating permanence and exclusion. The event was the second arrival of Albanians, who landed on the Adriatic coasts of Puglia and caused a major political crisis in the country. During the 1997 municipal elections one of the Northern League's mottos was 'one more vote [for the League], one less Albanian' (Gold 2003: 126). The party also had a flyer reading: 'No to the horde!' and under this an image of a boat crowded with people.⁷¹ The aim was clearly to give the idea of a horde of immigrants coming into the country. Particularly in relation to the emergency created by the Albanians coming to the Italian shores at the beginning of the 1990s, the Italian government had acted very questionably. The images of the immigrants gathered in a sports ground in the hottest summer days waiting for repatriation went around the world, and the Northern League took the chance to blame the government for the 'inhuman treatment' despite the discussions about solidarity (cf. Bossi & Vimercati 1992: 150).

In 1998, a new law regulating immigration and the legal status of foreigners in Italy (Law nr 40/1998 also known as Turco-Napolitano Law) presented a unitary normative framework on immigration. The law was actually the first that was not directly conceived in a situation of internal emergency 'in that it intended to treat immigration a permanent phe-

⁷¹ See the image at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/leganordpadania/2266352019/in/set-72157603924891452>

nomenon and to regulate the subject with a comprehensive act' (Zincone 2006: 23). The need for clear legislation on immigration was felt by almost all actors in parliament, with the exception of the Northern League.

The 1998 Law considered the immigrants legally present on Italian soil as potential citizens and provided a number of social and civic rights to the immigrants living permanently in Italy. At the same time, the law introduced a number of repressive measures against illegal immigration; this also in view of the Italy's entrance in the Schengen area. One of the most significant repressive measures introduced was the so-called 'temporary detention centres', where illegal immigrants without documents could be held (up to 30 days) for identification and possible repatriation.

The Northern League (and the radical left-wing party Rifondazione and the Greens) was strongly against the law, which the party considered left-wing, favouring illegal immigration and crime. In particular, the party considered unacceptable that the immigrants gained access to some of the same social and civic rights that applied to Italian citizens (cf. Lega Nord, 1999: 2-3 and Lega Nord Flash, March 1999). As in the past, the Northern League started a campaign at the beginning of 1999 to abrogate the text of the law. In May 1999 the party had already collected 700,000 signatures against the law, but the demand for a referendum was refused by the Constitutional Court.

The party continued to criticize the government's immigration regime, asserting that it did not reflect people's demands on the issue. For the League this was the result of the agreement between the political establishment and big capital, which had produced an 'assembly line' that 'first attracts and facilitates the entrance of illegal immigrant in the country and then, through the amnesties, regularises them' and this 'against the will of the people that wants to be free and to be its own masters at home [*padrone e libero a casa sua*]' (Bossi's speech in Parliament, December 20, 2000).

Quite significantly, one of the first measures realized by the newly established centre-right government in 2001 was the formulation of a new law on immigration. The Bossi-Fini law (law n.189 2002) was approved already in 2002. In the same years, the Northern League started to put increasing emphasis on aspects related to culture, identity and difference when dealing with immigration and particularly with the impact of immigrants from Muslim countries. These aspects are discussed in the following paragraphs.

6.3.3 The Bossi and Fini immigration law

As mentioned, one of the first legislative initiatives taken by the centre-right government in 2001 was the amendment of the Italian immigration law. As for most of the previous legislations on the matter, the Bossi-Fini Law sought to improve the migration flows and to contrast more effectively illegal immigration by means of a more restrictive system particularly in relation to the entries. Most of the conditions and rules introduced by the 2002 Law regarded the terms of entry of the immigrant labour force in the country, the conditions of permanence

and achievement of residence permit, family reunification and social integration. Relevant space was also given to control and measures against illegal immigration at the borders and to the norms concerning repatriation of illegal immigrants, had committed serious crimes, or lost their right to stay in the country.

The initial purpose of the centre-right government was to tighten the conditions and terms of immigration significantly, but the coalition had to find a compromise with the more moderate and Catholic component. This meant that some of the most restrictive measures, such as the proposal to make illegal immigration a crime, did not pass. Furthermore, the Bossi and Fini Law did not encroach on any of the social rights achieved under the previous centre-left reform not only for the documented, but also for the undocumented immigrants (cf. Zincone 2006: 31).⁷²

Several of these regulations followed the direction on immigration policy from the European Council in Seville in 2003, indicating an intensification of the bilateral co-operation between European and African countries to fight illegal immigration (e.g. Libya). The 2002 Law was criticized by humanitarian organizations because it allowed immediate expulsion of immigrants because of illegality or violation of some norms without right to appeal. Another aspect was the possibility to keep asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants in the so-called identification centres, waiting for their identification and eventual expulsion in the so-called temporary permanence centres, already created under the 1998 Law.

The Bossi and Fini Law also introduced the contract of residence (*contratto di soggiorno*), according to which immigrants coming to work in the country had to have a previous agreement with the Italian employer, who guaranteed the economic conditions and proper housing. Only with these guarantees can the immigrant apply for a permit to stay in the country for two years. Under legal working conditions the permit could then be renewed twice. Stricter measures were applied to family reunions and harsher punishments used against those abusing the rules.

The framework of the 2002 Law was, as in the past, mainly to regulate immigration in relation to the labour market and to contain and fight illegal immigration. Contrary to the 1998 Law, which considered immigrants as a permanent and potential part of the population and thus subject to duties and rights, the Bossi and Fini Law went back to an idea of immigration as a flexible and temporary factor and to immigrants as guest workers rather than citizens.

In comparison to the immigration law approved in Denmark with the support of the Danish People's Party the same year, the Italian Law dealt much less with questions of integration in society and for example with the question of naturalization. The conditions for

⁷²More recently, the Northern League has within the third Berlusconi government (2008-) introduced severe restrictions on some of the basic rights that undocumented immigrants and their children still were granted in Italy in spite of their irregular position, such as the right to basic medical assistance and education. These new measures were strongly criticised by the opposition, by NGOs and by most of the Catholic organisations in the country.

gaining Italian citizenship for non-EU members have always been strict, as it is possible only after a minimum of ten years of permanence in the country.

In 2006 the Northern League presented a bill introducing more rigid criteria of integration and loyalty to be entitled to Italian citizenship, asserting that ‘achieving Italian citizenship is a bureaucratic procedure’, which ignores important aspects such as ‘linguistic skills, or knowledge of our traditions, habits, history and of our institutional system and of the basic rules of our society’. In this sense, according to the party: ‘achieving citizenship should be the conclusion of a process leading the foreigner to his perfect integration with the territory and citizens of the state where he has decided to live’ (cf. Proposta di legge n. 1462, 2006). The party required tests of both Italian and the local language and of the history, culture and traditions and institutional system of the Italian Republic. These demands went clearly in the same direction as for example in Denmark, where the criteria of naturalization became increasingly dependent on the level of assimilation to the Danish society.

The fact that the Northern League was not able to achieve significant results in this direction was partly due to the disagreements with some of the Catholic components, which traditionally have a tolerant approach to immigration. But both centre left-wing and centre right-wing governments have until recently neglected these aspects, focussing on entry, permanence and work. In fact, the most important reform of the norms and conditions for achieving Italian citizenship still refer to a law approved in 1992 (cf. Legge n. 91 1992). Only a few additions were made over the years. Linguistic and integration tests are however likely to be introduced in the near future, particularly because of the increasing concern about integration of the Muslim minority in the country.

6.3.4 Recent developments of the Northern League on the anti-immigration question

As mentioned, for the Northern League immigration was not just a question of ‘costs and benefits’. Cultural differences seen in the perspective of integrating and assimilating other non-Western/non-Christian cultures, other habits, traditions and values without losing the original ethnic, cultural and religious identity, were concerns that had entered at a very early stage in its ideology and discourse. For the League, the immigration regime supported by the governments previous to 2001 represented a way ‘the political establishment (*partitocrazia*) used to introduce’ in the country and ‘against the popular will’ ‘the multiracial society and all its contradictions’ (Lega Nord, Programma elettorale 1994).

From the 1990s, the Northern League began to deal with and speak increasingly against multiculturalism and against the development of a multiethnic society. This interpretation was fully developed in the late 1990s in relation to harsh critique against the process of globalization/mondialization, where the political establishment and big capital were considered the main actors behind the project for a multicultural and multiracial society. It was in those years that the ideology of the Northern League started to be influenced by the discourses and ideology developed by the *Nouvelle Droite* in France during the 1970s and 1980s (cf. also Scaliati

2006: 62). This influence emerges quite clearly in a party pamphlet published in 1998 entitled: 'Padania, identity and multiracial societies' (Enti Locali Padani Federali 1998). The document makes rather explicit the 'differentialist view of the world' of the Northern League (Enti Locali Padani Federali 1998: 14). The pamphlet also presented a rather elaborate formulation of what the party considered the direct consequences of globalization (often referred to as 'mondialization') on Western contemporary societies and the role played by politics and by multinational capital (in the text called the 'immigrationist lobby') to construct a multiethnic society on the ashes of the different cultural, ethnic and religious identities of the native people and communities (Enti Locali Padani Federali 1998: 3):

The so-called multiracial society is supported first of all by the alliance between the world finance and the left wing. This alliance is based on both economic and ideological grounds. The global economy looks away from the people, the nations and the state and interprets the world as one big market place where men and capital can be moved around following exclusively the logic of the profit. To accelerate the mondialization process the aim is the creation of a 'global consumer' with no relation to his past, origins and traditions, without any identity if not that given by the commercials of the moment. This is the figure concretely and ideally realized by the multiracial society as it is preached by the various Benetton and McDonalds.

The document also took an explicit anti-American position, suggesting the existence of a conspiracy by the political establishment, and strong economic powers and the Church to lobby against the survival of the local, regional and national identities, traditions and cultures.

Particularly in relation to the Church and the Catholic world, the position of the Northern League was very contradictory. Until the late 1990s, the Northern League had a very negative opinion of the Church, in particular the clergy at the Vatican, which was considered to represent positions that were directly in contrast with the rest of the Catholic world 'outside'. On several occasions, the Northern League directly attacked the Pope and representatives of the Church, often on questions related to immigration, on which the party accused the Church of having 'Catholic-Communist' positions that were close to the left-wing multicultural and multiethnic ideal. Even so, this did not prevent the League from speaking in favour of the preservation and defence of Christian and Catholic values, principally against the attacks coming from Islam.

6.3.5 *The Northern League on Islam*

The originally strident anti-clericalism of the League has softened in recent years. Today, the party describes Benedict XVI as a 'strong and resolute Pope' determined to defend Christianity, 'its values and millenarian tradition from Islamic fundamentalism' (cf. Betz & Meret 2009). This is also in line with the League's anti-Islam position that developed particularly from the start of the 21st century.

In 2000, the party leaflet *Lega Nord Flash* was entitled 'Islam advances'; it was a warning that used France as an example of a European country under siege by a growing Muslim

community, where – according to the party – the process of Islamization of the French society was already visible (Lega Nord Flash November 2000: 2-3). In October 2001, the same publication was entitled ‘The difficult relationship with the Muslims’ and emphasised the lack of respect in most of the Muslim world for universal rights and intolerance against non-Muslims.

In 2006, Northern League MP Federico Bricolo, declared it necessary ‘to close the doors to those coming from the Muslim countries’ as ‘with these [people] we must use the iron fist. The same that they use with us’ (Bricolo in *La Padania* 19-09-2006). The same year, in the aftermath of the social and political unrest created by the publication of the Mohammed cartoons in a Danish broadsheet, the Northern League claimed that the party had in fact been the first political force to warn against the dangers of Islam for Western societies and that this had for a long time been ignored by the rest of the political establishment.

As we have seen in the case of the Danish People’s Party, also the Northern League has always strongly opposed construction of new mosques on Italian soil. The party has on more than one occasion opposed municipal plans by supporting the local anti-mosque initiatives, or by organizing popular protests against it.

In 2000, the municipal council of Lodi, a town in Lombardy, decided to allow construction of a mosque, and the reaction of the Northern League was immediate. The party supported a public demonstration against the project and started to collect signatures among the citizens, explaining that the Padanian soil should remain Christian and not become Muslim (*La Repubblica* 15-10-2000). As it will be explained below, the Northern League continued in the following years to develop this approach towards identity and value politics. In this sense, it is difficult not to see a common pattern with other radical right parties in the rest of Europe.

The Northern League organized a popular demonstration against the building of a mosque at Lodi, in which it was claimed that ‘the shadow of the minaret will never obscure one of our bell towers [*campanili*], therefore we say no to the mosque on the site freely given by the municipal administration’ (quoted in *Il Corriere della Sera* 26-09-2000). In reality, there was no plan to build a minaret. On the same occasion the party used ‘out of the ordinary’ initiatives, for example the celebration of a Catholic mass on the site designated for the mosque and pouring pig urine to make the place unclean. Since then, the Northern League has actively and resolutely opposed any plan to construct a mosque on a public site by mobilizing the local community and at times by suggesting use of less ordinary measures and anti-mosque protests. In Bologna in 2007, Roberto Calderoli, prominent member of the Northern League and at that time vice president of the Senate, suggested a ‘Pig-day against Islam’ against the construction of the mosque (cf. *La Repubblica* 13-09-2007). These methods created some embarrassment at the top of the party leadership, but in reality these excesses had a great media impact and were in line with the populist style of the Northern League.

Some of the Northern League’s legislative proposals were clearly a form of political mobilization against Islam. In 2002, for instance, the League introduced a proposal for mandatory exhibition of the Christian cross ‘in all public buildings and public administrations of

the Italian Republic' to remind all 'dangerous and impudent Muslims that they are in a Christian country' (La Repubblica 18-09-2002). In the same year, the party proposed introducing an explicit reference to the values and principles of Christianity in the European Constitution and later also to modify the Italian Constitution by adding a paragraph to the article on religious freedom asserting that 'the Republic considers the Christian religious tradition its spiritual foundation'.

From 2000 and particularly after 2001, reference to the defence of Christian values and heritage became a central ideological feature in the value politics of the Northern League. At the practical level, the party advanced a number of bills where the importance of Christianity was emphasised, in particular in relation to its values and cultural differences from Islam.

In 2008, the party presented a proposal to regulate the construction of mosques, considered a necessary step to solve the problem represented by 'the presence of numerous religious communities that require at several levels the preservation of a specific cultural identity in contrast with ours' (Proposta di legge n. 1246/2008). The demands included: 1) a distance of minimum 1 km between the new building and edifices belonging to other religious denominations; 2) a ban on using instruments to spread sound or messages in open public places (e.g. minarets); 3) the explicit acceptance of the democratic and secular bases of the Italian state by the religious leaders; 4) a clear identification of the parties financing the project. The building of a mosque was therefore not categorically denied, but it would be subject to regulation. In practice, however, as we have seen above, the party ranks were always opposed to the projects.

In several ways, the League's anti-Islam position followed some of the same developments characterising other radical right parties in Europe, most notably the Danish People's Party. However, some differences can be noticed in the way the two parties have articulated this. The Northern League has continued to emphasise aspects of internal and international security in relation to immigration in general and more specifically illegal immigration from Muslim countries. The value and cultural aspect has also become one of the leading themes when the party deals with the question of Islam. Particularly after 2001, this is increasingly considered in relation to the Western Christian values, principles and traditions. Within this perspective, the emphasis has increasingly fallen on the significance of Christianity as a cultural and value reference.

The party's decision to run with the centre-right coalition *La Casa delle Libertà* (CdL) again at the 2006 election and asking to introduce an explicit political reference to the defence of the European Christian roots and the fight against every form of fundamentalism is significant in this connection (cf. Lega Nord, *Le richieste della lega nord Padania*, 2006: 1). This was included in the coalition's 2006 electoral programme, which was entitled 'Values in progress', in which the coalition parties expressed general commitment to the protection and preservation of the traditions, identities and liberty (CdL programma elettorale 2006: 8):

Only by preserving the values (...) we can safeguard our identity and enjoy our liberty. In this strategy, the national and federal state, being the sum of our shared values and site of our common destiny, exerts a fundamental subsidiary and rebalancing role between the past and the future, between the inside and the outside. A role of defence of the Jewish and Christian roots of Europe against every form of fundamentalism.

The attention to moral principles and ethical values has developed in the Northern League in direct relation to the Western Christian roots, rather than on politics emphasising basic libertarian principles such as democracy, tolerance, gender equality as it is today more the case of the Danish People's Party.

6.4 Foreign policy and EU relations

6.4.1 From pro-EU to Euroscepticism

In the 1990s, the Northern League was among the most enthusiastic and pro-EU political parties in Italy. Italians have traditionally been very positive about the process of European integration and the Northern League followed this enthusiasm for a while.

The party used the EU as an example of efficiency against what it considered the highly centralized, bureaucratic and largely inefficient organization of the Italian public administration. The slogan 'far away from Rome, but closer to Europe' was used by the party to emphasise the political and cultural proximity of the Northern Italian regions to Europe and Brussels, highlighting at the same time what the party considered the political, geographic and cultural distance from Rome and from the South.

The interest of the Northern League in relation to European integration and development was essentially related to the economic aspects. The EU offered important support to the growth and improvement of the small and medium size industries of the North, where a significant part of the Northern League electoral support came from. Therefore, when in the mid-1990s Italy risked to be left out of the European Monetary Union, because the country did not comply with the economic parameters decided in the Maastricht Treaty; the Northern League insisted it was important for the country to come in the EMU from the start. The 1994 electoral programme underlined the need to implement the necessary reforms of the national economy to be able to rebalance the public debt and meet the Maastricht parameters. The programme also underlined the importance of being part of a united Europe in an age of globalization and general international insecurity (Lega Nord 1994):

[The Northern League says] a clear yes to the European Union, political and economic, as this is taking shape according to the Maastricht Treaty, signed by all EEC countries. This choice entails for the country a pro-European policy, coherent and credible, driven by liberalism and federalism and respectful of all the communitarian obligations.

According to the party a solution was to let the Northern regions join the EMU first, waiting for later admission of the 'rest' of Italy. The party expressed this hypothesis in the 1996 electoral programme:

Will Italy get in or stay outside the 'hard core' of the countries that will form Europe in the years to come? The question is central (...) We have to decide whether we want to tighten our belt and be efficient as our Northern neighbours – thus joining the locomotives of the European train – or whether we want to postpone the sacrifices to better times, and to future generations, going together with the Greeks, the Portuguese and the other wagons at the back. According to the League's evaluations, the regions of the North taken together fulfill or are very close to fulfilling the famous Maastricht criteria (...) Nothing against being together with the Greeks and the Portuguese. But if we can join those who are considered more efficient, the 'hard core', why do we have to renounce? Most people in the regions of the North would prefer this (Lega Nord 1996).

The issue was used by the Northern League to emphasize the failure of the Italian government to work efficiently for the country's interests and in particular for the North. With the promise of bringing Padania alone into the new forming Europe, the Northern League sought to strengthen popular support for Northern secession. This position became particularly evident in 1996, when the League – after a very brief parenthesis in government – was again a radical political force at the margins, asserting the need of the Northern regions to emancipate from the rest of Italy. In relation to the EU, the party started to emphasise the political project of a Europe of the peoples, able to contain and preserve the differences and the self-determination of the diverse ethnic groups.

When the centre-left government led by Romano Prodi managed to get Italy into the European monetary area, the League started to shift position on the EU. This opened up a phase of EU-scepticism that still characterises the Northern League (cf. Tarchi 2007: 191-192). The party started to criticize the highly bureaucratic and centralized European super-state.

Over the years, the League's position on the EU has become similar to that of the Danish People's Party; EU is seen as a supranational organ limiting national freedom and autonomy. The difference is that for the Northern League, this is also related to the local and regional realities and not only to the general national context. The Northern League has criticized both the ratification of the Treaty of Nice and the enlargement to the Eastern European countries. The party has also attacked the work of the EU convention, considering the EU constitution a document that does not represent the values and principles on which European history and society is built. Even more interestingly, the party was among the fiercest advocates for the introduction of a clear reference to the Christian roots into the text of the European constitution. This refers to a similar development of the Western European radical right, where immigration, particularly from Muslim countries, became one of the most concrete dangers to the survival of the Christian West, both in relation to culture and national security.

This was also why the Northern League opposed any attempt to ‘open the doors’ of Europe to Turkey.

Being in government with a clear EU-sceptical position has not been easy for the party, as it has complicated its position on deciding and ratifying EU decisions. In reality, it proved much less problematic for the party’s credibility that one would expect. The party was able to follow a moderate and rather pragmatic position at the institutional level, fuelling the polemics and critiques against EU in the press and through the rhetoric of its leaders (see also Tarchi 2007: 195).

In effect, going against the tide by continuing to emphasise an EU-critical position within a pro-European government, allowed the Northern League to maintain the necessary degree of differentiation from the other parties in the coalition. It was a strategy that helped (and still helps) the party maintain the image of a political force in opposition to the establishment, although it had government responsibilities.

6.4.2 The League’s anti-Americanism of the 1990s and its position on NATO

In the 1994 Northern League electoral programme, Italian membership of NATO is explained in terms of ‘the only military defence system of our continent’, which the European countries had to join at least until a new and effective European alternative would be created, as indicated in the Maastricht Treaty (cf. Lega Nord 1994). In those years, the situation in the Balkans had seriously deteriorated and the party asked for complete diplomatic and political isolation of Serbia from the international community, warning against a direct intervention in the country.

Support to the NATO alliance was endorsed also in the Northern League following the electoral programme in 1996 (cf. Lega Nord 1996). However, the deepening of the conflicts in the Balkans changed this perspective (see also Tarchi 2007: 193). The decision of the NATO forces to intervene in the Yugoslavian region of Kosovo was strongly condemned. Bossi declared that the struggle in Kosovo was between the Christian Serbs, who tried to defend their culture and values, and the Muslim Albanians, the vast majority of whom had arrived as immigrants and now demanded independence and annexation into the Albanian state. In April 1999, Umberto Bossi was in Beograd to visit Slobodan Milosevic and he avowed that the Northern League was the only political force in opposition in a NATO country which supported a political diplomatic solution in response to the intervention of the NATO forces in the region (cf. La Repubblica 24-04-1999). This position seemed to contradict the position of the party, which had previously declared that it supported rights of self-determination and freedom of the diverse peoples. At the same time, the Northern League was focussing its politics of identity on a new target – the growing presence of Islam in Italy (see also Betz 2002). Just as other radical right parties in Europe, the logic was that what happened in Kosovo, could also happen in Europe (cf. Betz-Meret 2009).

The Northern League considered the NATO resolution in Kosovo a clear symptom of the political and social weakness of Europe in relation to the US hegemony. In an article to the party newspaper *La Padania*, Bossi declared that ‘we must stop the criminal project of the USA to destroy the UN’ adding that Europe had to say ‘no to the world empire’ (*La Padania* 29-04-1999). According to Bossi, the reason the US strongly supported the NATO intervention in the Balkans was to ‘show that the country was not against the Muslims after the [first] war in Iraq’ and that for this reason they decided to hit the shield of Christianity, Serbia’.

In the late 1990s, the anti-US statements were in line with the party’s negative view of the international role of the US in relation to Europe. But the criticism was also directed at the American society at large, which for the party represented the negative result of globalization and multiculturalism. In a section of ‘Padania, identity and multiracial society’, entitled ‘Multiracial society and mondialism: the system to kill the peoples!’, the US is referred to as the ‘ideal and practical model of reference of that kind of social design [the multiracial society] which on a daily basis sets of interracial conflicts, often ending in violent outbreaks, as during the riots in L.A.’⁷³

The League’s anti-American position changed after 9/11 (cf. Tarchi 2007: 194). The United States became the victim of Islamic terrorism and the symbol of the Western values of freedom, tolerance and liberty under the threat of Islamic terrorism. As for the Danish People’s Party, the equation between terrorism, Islamism and immigration became one of the central themes in the Northern League’s ideology and discourses.

6.5 On traditional values: family, abortion and homosexuality

In the politics of the Northern League the family has always played an important role. The family is referred to as the fundamental element in the Italian society, providing the society with the necessary cohesion and contributing both with economic and social resources where the welfare system is lacking.

Until the beginning of the 1990s, the Christian Democracy had ownership of the family ‘issue’. The party safeguarded in particular the traditional and Catholic family. When the DC split up in 1994, family politics became a field where also other parties and in particular new formations like the Northern League and Forza Italia, could develop politics that appealed to this issue. It was also what the Northern League did in the 1990s, by promoting ‘politics in support of the family and the woman and referred also to the problems emerging from the dualism labour and family’ (Lega Nord 1994). Already in 1994, the party mentioned the family not only for its important social function, but also as an antidote to the commodification and depersonalization of contemporary societies.

However an interesting change took place in 2000-01, when the Northern League started to put increasing emphasis on Christian and Western values and traditions. Also in ‘family

⁷³ Padania, identity and multiracial societies, p. 13.

terms', the target of the party's family politics became almost synonymous with the 'family unit' consisting of a married couple and their children. The party started to consider alternative forms of relationships as detrimental, if not directly damaging to the efficiency and internal organization of a society. This position is clearly expressed in a party document for the 2001 election, in which the League criticised the lack of social awareness and responsibility produced by the increasing focus in contemporary society on individual rights and needs rather than on social and collective forms of relationships and structures (Lega Nord, Elezioni 2001. Ragionamenti per la campagna elettorale 2001):

From the victory of the individualist positivist philosophy derives the present reality, consisting of new forms of co-existence that are different from the civic or religious traditional family: some say that these [new forms] are also expressions of love and reciprocal support and thus there is someone who thinks that they have the same social function as the traditional family; but if they want to be officially recognized and authorized they have to be judged on the basis of their social and civic value in relation to the common good and thus on: their social function; project; stability pact; fertility.

Evidently the definition above excluded recognition of homosexual couples, because they are infertile. But also unmarried couples entailed greater social uncertainty and instability compared to the conventional family (Lega Nord, Elezioni 2001: 7). In the politics of the League the traditional family has started to represent the 'very heart of a civilization' and 'where the deepest core of our culture and traditions that make one with our collective identity, is preserved' (Lega Nord 2001: 9). Thus the marriage and the family are considered institutions that have to be safeguarded as this is where the values and traditions are produced and transmitted from one generation to another.

Significantly in this sense, in the 2001 electoral agreement between the Northern League and the other parties of the centre-right coalition, among the family figures as the first of the four main pillars indicated by the parties; the others are economic development, devolution and reform of the state and immigration (CdL Patto Lega-Polo 2001). The family policies approved by the centre-right coalition in the period 2001-2006 were much more limited than the goals formulated by the Northern League during the electoral campaign. The finance acts approved by the centre-right government included funding to finance children's day nurseries, introduction of tax reductions for families with children, establishment of a baby cheque of about 1,000 euro for every child born after 2005 in families with lower incomes (cf. Legge Finanziaria no 448/2002; Legge Finanziaria 266/2005). However, the achievements of most of the measures were limited and no real and long-term initiative was taken to promote and facilitate higher participation by mothers on the labour market and to improve maternity leave.

In the second Berlusconi government (2001-2006) nothing was done to give to unmarried heterosexual couples the same rights as married couples. Particular opposition was then shown against rights for homosexual couples. When the centre-left government proposed in

2007 a law giving unmarried and homosexual couples some of the same rights recognized to married couples, the Northern League argued that the aim of the centre-left was in reality to 'destroy the family and destroy the glue of the local communities and our identity, also in relation to our Catholic roots and to destroy the heritage of values of our young generations' (Lega Nord 2007).

Also in recent years has the Northern League adopted a much more conformist position the family, homosexuality and abortion. The party has developed a very traditionalist profile that at times seems to be in conflict with some of the positions expressed in the past. In this respect, the Northern League has moved closer to the authoritarianism and conformism that some scholars consider characteristic of the radical right on value politics. There is also a difference between the politics recently developed by the Danish People's Party and the Northern League. While the former party has tried to open its politics in the direction of more tolerant positions, for example towards gender equality, freedom of speech and homosexuality, the Northern League has chosen a more traditional pattern of political and ideological development. In this sense, the emphasis is more on the Christian values, identity and traditions rather than on more secular and libertarian principles as in the case of the Danish People's Party. This difference of emphasis can partly be explained by the higher level of secularization of the Danish society. The Danish People's Party's voters are very secularised (see here chapter 8). In the Italian society, the process of secularization has not been as strong as in the Scandinavian countries, which means that segments of the Italian electorate still respond to positions that defend the Christian world against the dangers represented by a growing Muslim community in their midst.

Conclusions

Until very recently the Northern League was only after careful explanations considered a party belonging to the radical right. The party was rather considered more closely related to the European ethno-regionalist and independentist movements, with whom the Northern League had several aspects in common, e.g. being politically and electorally anchored in the Italian North and its demands for greater fiscal and legislative autonomy to the regions in the North of the country. Furthermore, during the second half of the 1990s, the declarations and demands of self-government and independence of the 'Padanian' state from the rest of the country created more than a concern within the institutional Italy.

These positions were thus considered very much at odds with the rhetoric and agenda of the radical right, which referred to national belonging, communal identity and culture as unifying elements against the growing risks and insecurities provoked by immigration and by the rapid processes of transformation taking place in the contemporary societies.

Even so, the Northern League shared also a number of ideological similarities with the positions that in those years were already strongly emphasised by the radical right; one was anti-immigration and the other was the party's contempt for the political establishment.

As shown in this chapter, the party has ideologically come closer to the positions of the other Western European radical right parties from the end of the 1990s. The Northern League is still a party whose electoral support comes largely (but now not any more exclusively) from the Northern Italian constituencies, particularly Lombardy and Veneto, but the party has in recent years strongly contained and de-radicalised its ethno-regionalist commitment and standpoints. This process went together with the decision taken at the end of the 1990s to opt for office seeking strategies. At that point the Northern League had reached a dead end, where the times' conditions and political opportunities clearly showed that there were no concrete premises and no future in its radical plans to create a new state in the state by means of a 'soft' separation of the North. The party leadership therefore decided to make use of the votes by running for office again in the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi despite its very limited success at government in 1994. Compared to the first time, the LN worked to build a profile of a trustworthy coalition partner, with clear political goals and a stable organisation.

The responsibilities that came with being in office influenced the politics supported by the party. In the years that followed the 2001 election, the Northern League developed a much more domesticated form of fiscal and structural reform called devolution. At the same time the position of the party against both legal and illegal immigration became more explicit. In relation to this issue the Northern League emphasised aspects of security and law and order, criticising at the same time the immigration regimes of the previous governments, responsible for having opened the doors to the country. In 2002 the Northern League was one of the main architects behind the new Bossi-Fini immigration law (Law 189/2002), which significantly tightened the rules and terms of immigration and stay in the country.

Through the years, the party also became increasingly engaged in identity and cultural aspects in relation to immigration. Already in 2000, the Northern League had started to mobilize against what the party considered the dangerous advance of Islam in the West. Every new project for the construction of a mosque was strongly and almost systematically opposed by the party. Similarly to other radical right parties in Europe, such as the Freedom Party in Austria, the Northern League explains Islam in a framework of an 'antithetic other', in which the self is defined as the Western European civilization, whose spiritual and value heritage is in Christianity. The reference to Christianity was one of the significant ideological turns of the party, which in the past had a clear anti-clerical and a secularized approach to religion. It was not the only ideological transformation of the party to indicate the adaptability and dynamic development of the ideology of this party.

The Northern League was a party with a clear positive view about the European Union until the end of the 1990s when it changed position. Today the party is member of the Eurosceptical group, Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN), in the European Parliament.

Less relevant changes have taken place in relation to the economic dimension. The Northern League has maintained a neo-liberal approach with populist and protectionist features. A better and more efficient public administration reducing the costs of the public

budget, general cutbacks in public spending helped by the introduction of fiscal federalism and more space to the private initiative characterise the position of the Northern League on economics. It is in particular the interests of the small and medium enterprises that the Northern League has most at heart, which the present situation of economic crisis and increasing international competition has laid on the line. The party is much more critical when it comes to big business and big capital, considered the dominating economic monopolies that drain public money and threaten the interests of the local communities.

Until recently the Northern League has thus mainly worked for and safeguarded the economic interests of those social groups that are most likely support the party. However, the recent developments indicate that the Northern League is now doing well also among other social groups, for example manual workers and quite remarkably in electoral constituencies that in the past traditionally voted for left-wing parties. It is therefore interesting to see how the party will in the near future appease the different and at times opposite interests of the electoral basis. This may have an impact on the party profile in relation to economics, coming closer to more pro-welfare positions.

7. THE AUSTRIAN FREEDOM PARTY

Introduction

The electoral comeback of the FPÖ in the late 1980s and 1990s has always been closely related to its political and ideological course started in the mid-1980s under the leadership of Jörg Haider. This explains why most of the studies published on the party have focussed more on the political views and charisma of Jörg Haider than on the party's ideology and electoral profile. It is not an exaggeration to say that until Haider's exit from the party in 2005, the FPÖ was basically synonymous with him. This can also help to explain why, despite the plentiful studies that have been published on the FPÖ particularly in the recent decade, there are so few scholarly works which engage in the analysis of the party ideological development, especially when looking at the literature in English.

The aim of this chapter is to look at the way FPÖ's ideology has developed over time and to consider similarities and differences in relation to the Danish People's Party and the Northern League. The analysis of the party ideology is based on some of the party's official programmes released from about the mid 1980s until about 2007.⁷⁴ If the party programmes of the 1980s represent the transformation and new breakthrough of the Austrian Freedom Party, the 1990s correspond to the phase of consolidation and vote maximization under the leadership of Jörg Haider (cf. Luther 2001). In this phase the party prepared the ideological groundwork for the electoral success achieved at the parliamentary elections of October 1999, which paved the way into office in 2000 in a coalition with the ÖVP.

In the years that followed the entrance in office, the FPÖ experienced an electoral decline that was also the result of the party's failure to manage effectively the achievement of government responsibility (cf. Luther 2007). In November 2002, at the new anticipated elections that were called after the crisis created by the resignation of a number of FPÖ ministers from their post, the electorate penalized the party, whose votes dropped to only 10 pct. Although the party managed again to get into government with the ÖVP in 2003, internal disagreements continued to characterise and divide the party from within and in 2005 Jörg Haider, together with the government team and the Kärnten provincial party organization, left the party and launched the *Bündnis Zukunft Österreich* (Alliance for the Future of Austria, BZÖ).

Released from government responsibility, the FPÖ sans Haider and under the new leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache was able to recover part of its electoral strength. In 2006 the party achieved 11 pct. of the votes (cf. Table 1.1 chap. 1), which was regarded as an overall positive result, considering the troubled years the party had gone through before the election. In this period, the ideology and position of the FPÖ went towards a phase of renewed radicalisation, particularly in relation to immigration and EU integration policy. Welfare, security and opposition to immigrants ranked high on the party's agenda. At the election of 2008, the party

⁷⁴ However, the text also indicates that the aim in the 2008 election was to follow up, where possible, with updates that refer to the most recent developments of the party.

achieved over 17 pct. of the votes, showing greater electoral appeal in opposition than in office (cf. Luther 2007).

7.1 Historical overview and electoral development

7.1.1 The FPÖ from the origins to 1999

The origins of the FPÖ date back to the 1950s. In 1949 the League of Independents (*Verband der Unabhängigen*, VdU) was founded with the aim of building a national-liberal political alternative to the duopoly represented by the other two camps (or *Lager*) represented by the ÖVP or the SPÖ.

The politics of cooperation and consensus between the two parties and among the labour market parties (employers and trade unions) became a characteristic of the Austrian model, providing the country with economic stability, labour market flexibility and social partnership.

At the 1949 elections the VdU got 12 pct. of the votes, which peaked at 20 pct. in some of the Western zones of occupation (cf. Hubert 2000: 46). Between one-third and one-half of the VdU members had a Nazi past and one of the party demands at that time was the lifting of wartime restrictions and the end to the penal laws against former Nazis. In the following years the party electoral support fell consistently and striving for survival it was transformed into the FPÖ (Höbelt 2003: 10; see also Sully 1997). For decades the newly formed FPÖ did not manage to get more than 8 pct. of the votes at the national level, with strongholds in the Western and Southern parts of the country. In the same period, the leader of the FPÖ, Friedrich Peter, tried to anchor the party to the democratic party system, preparing it for participation in a coalition government in 1983.

Under the leadership of Norbert Steiger (1980-1986), the FPÖ launched an office seeking course. The party thus adopted a more moderate and less confrontational approach and emphasised anti-establishment politics and liberal and free market positions. From 1983 to 1986 the FPÖ was in government in a small coalition with the SPÖ. In the same years, two new small environmental parties ran for parliament and in 1986 they got in, reaching just above the Austrian electoral threshold of 3 pct.

Steiger's liberal political course gave the FPÖ a position in government, but this did not save the party from electoral decline. For about two decades, the FPÖ had in fact never managed to get over 5-6 pct. of the votes at the national level. The electoral crisis was therefore from many sides considered a consequence of the government seeking and liberalist political reposition attempted by Steiger, which had diluted the party identity as a political alternative to the establishment. In 1986, Jörg Haider became party leader, helped by the faction within the party that had become increasingly critical on Steiger and had laid the groundwork for his defeat at the FPÖ congress that same year (see Höbelt 2003 42-47). For some Austrian scholars (cf. Bailer-Galanda & Neugebauer 1996: 6), this represented a significant milestone in the

further development of the so-called Pan-Germanic political position, the idea of a German reunited community of one people and one culture.

At the anticipated elections of November 1986, the FPÖ under the new party leadership doubled its electoral result, gaining 9.7 pct. of the votes (see Table 1.1, chapter 1). At the following election the FPÖ moved definitely away from the liberal and office seeking position and started to run on immigration grievances, becoming also increasingly critical against the political establishment and against the EU. The new political course was not appreciated by the political establishment, which used politics of containment to keep the FPÖ at the margins of Austrian politics and without relevant political influence.

7.1.2 FPÖ's years in government (2000-2005)

The 1999 election changed dramatically the configuration of Austrian politics. For the first time, the ÖVP agreed to form a government coalition with the FPÖ. Due to the internal and international critique of FPÖ's participation in government, Wolfgang Schüssel (ÖVP) became federal chancellor, while Jörg Haider declined any position within the newly formed government. However, the FPÖ achieved two important ministerial positions, finance and social affairs. But the challenges of being in office soon undermined the party's internal stability and electoral support. As well described by Luther (Luther 2007: 8)

The party's strategy in the governmental arena was undermined by weaknesses in its ministerial team, programmatic contradictions, the need to support some neo-liberal ÖVP reforms unpopular with blue collar voters (...) persuading the voters that a party that had since 1986 pursued aggressive structural oppositions was now a reliable steward of the nation's affairs was always going to be a struggle. Moreover, the party had difficulty affecting the transition from a well-oiled electoral machine to a communicator of the government's policy and alleged achievements.

The peak of unpopularity was reached when the ÖVP-FPÖ government decided to postpone the tax reforms in the summer 2002, while the parties were working on an agreement for purchasing new interceptor jets. Furthermore, internal conflicts in the FPÖ about its strategy in office had seriously divided the party leadership, particularly between the members of the party in government and Jörg Haider with the party grassroots. The situation became critical and finally some of the FPÖ's prominent ministers resigned,⁷⁵ which led to new parliamentary elections in November 2002.

During the electoral campaign the Freedom Party remained deeply split and was unable to organize an effective political strategy. Within less than two months, the party changed five party leaders five times. In the 2002 election, FPÖ's support dropped to only 10 pct. Most of

⁷⁵ Especially the resignation of the party leader, Susanne Riess-Passer, appointed in 2000 by Jörg Haider, and Finance Minister Karl-Heinz Grasser provoked turmoil in the parliamentary group.

its voters went over to the ÖVP (see SORA 2002),⁷⁶ which was the party that most strongly benefitted from the FPÖ internal crisis. The ÖVP became the largest party in Austria with 42 pct. of the votes and 79 parliamentary seats, a total gain of 15.4 pct. points and 27 seats – the largest gain for an Austrian party in the post-war period. The SPÖ made only moderate gains and achieved 36 pct. of the votes, losing its status of largest parliamentary force in the country.

Despite the poor electoral result, the FPÖ decided to enter coalition negotiations with the ÖVP. This decision meant giving away most of the demands advanced by the party ‘rebels’ under the previous government and it was criticised by several party members who did not agree with what they considered the party’s line of pursuing office at any cost.

In April 2005, leading members and among them Jörg Haider, decided to leave and founded the new party BZÖ. The decision created some turmoil, since it was taken while the FPÖ was still in office. But since most of the party’s government members joined the BZÖ, the FPÖ was suddenly free from responsibility. This new phase resulted in a radicalization of its politics and ideology and under the new leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache the FPÖ went back to the primary goal of vote maximization (cf. Luther 2007: 11).

7.1.3 The FPÖ outside government and the new phase of radicalization

In 2006 the party started to mobilise the electorate by going back to issues like anti-immigration, anti-Islam and EU skeptical positions. Few months before the election that was held on October 2006, the FPÖ launched a campaign called ‘*Österreich bleibt frei!*’ (Austria must remain free), whose aim was to collect signatures against admitting Turkey into EU. The campaign was not very successful (cf. Liste der Volksbegehren in Österreich), but this initiative pointed to a position that in recent years has become central on FPÖ’s agenda, namely anti-Islam.

At the 2006 election, the FPÖ got 11 pct. of the votes and 21 parliamentary seats. In comparison to 2002, the party had gained from an electoral campaign with a more compact party organization and with a clearer political agenda based on anti-immigration politics and EU skepticism. This result was further improved at the 2008 election with more than 17 pct. of the votes, showing that the party was electorally more successful in opposition than in government (cf. Heinisch 2003).

The following pages will look at how the FPÖ’s ideological position has changed and developed over time and in relation to the Austrian political landscape. With regard to the comparative analysis, particular attention will be paid to the similarities and differences that the FPÖ has developed in relation to the Danish People’s Party and the Northern League referring to the same (main) ideological dimensions discussed in the chapters about the two parties.

⁷⁶ SORA (Institute for Social Research and Analysis), *Wahlanalyse zur Nationalratswahl 2002* (<http://www.sora.at/de>; last accessed 28-10-2008).

7.2 NEO-LIBERALISM AND TAXES

7.2.1 Individual freedom and neo-liberal politics

One of the central values formulated in all FPÖ programmes already in the 1950s is the principle of individual freedom in society. The emphasis on individual freedom clearly and directly originated from the liberal standpoint that the FPÖ sought to promote and which, as we will see, the party leadership did not find in contrast with its pan-German nationalist position. Thus, already in 1954 the first paragraph of the *Bad Ausser Programm* of the VdU stated that the party supported the ‘freedom for the improvement (*Entfaltung*) of the individual within society’ and that one of the party’s main concerns was to support individual well being, freedom and opportunities to improve (cf. VdU 1954).

At the beginning, the principle of individual freedom and free initiative went hand in hand with a strong pan-German nationalism and with an anti-Semitic and anti-Slav position that in reality had little in common with traditional liberalist views. This, as Höbel has observed (2003: 9), was specific of Austrian liberals, who had always been strong German nationalists, without feeling that this contradicted their liberal commitment.

The importance of individual freedom as a basic principle in society was deliberately emphasised in the name of the party and in the programme of the newly formed Austrian Freedom Party, which in 1955 took over what remained of the VdU. The first paragraph of the political agenda underlined that the members of the FPÖ had to ‘devote themselves to the fundamental principle of freedom and thus to the basic right of the individual and the people’ (FPÖ, *Das Kurzprogramm* 1955).

Significantly, all FPÖ programmes start with a paragraph dedicated to the principle and right to individual freedom. In the policy agenda approved under the leadership of the liberal Norbert Steger in 1985, freedom is described as the most precious value, based on ‘self-determination, independence and personal responsibility’. The goal of the party was thus to put people’s freedom at the top of the world order and to protect this from ‘physical, intellectual and economic oppression’. We find this concept expressed in the same terms also in the 1997 Programme of the FPÖ, where Chapter 1 defines freedom as a ‘supreme possession for all people’ that must be granted to everybody (FPÖ 1997: 3).

The FPÖ’s position on individual freedom was strongly related to the right of private property, which for the party represented the very realization of freedom, ensuring the individuals the products of their work and of their creative and productive efforts (FPÖ 1997: 4). Considering these premises it is not surprising that the party supported policies developing a ‘fair market economy’, where the rules of the free market can enhance the competitive strength of the Austrian economy, but where individuals feel a degree of social responsibility towards others, particularly the less privileged and the environment (cf. FPÖ 1997: 20-21).

The neo-liberal interpretation fits rather well in the case of the Freedom Party and particularly in relation to the party’s development during the 1990s. As mentioned, the political

beginnings of the Freedom Party took place under the banner of the liberal camp and this was clearly emphasised by indicating individual freedom as one of the cardinal points of the party's ideology and view of the world. Particularly under the leadership of Jörg Haider, the FPÖ was clearly in favour of implementation of what the party considered a fair market economy. The FPÖ supported tax reduction policies and the demand for less state intervention and more privatization and liberalization of the national economy. In several respects, the neo-liberal profile developed by the FPÖ between the mid-1980s and 1990s was much more similar to that of the Northern League than to the pro-welfare image promoted by the Danish People's Party.

In 1997 the FPÖ supported the complete deregulation of the economic life. According to the party, this would bring economic prosperity and a higher degree of stability to the Austrian economy and labour market. The programme included a plan for a 'genuine privatization' of the Austrian economy. In particular, the party demanded the withdrawal of the political parties from their dominant involvement in the national economy and reduced influence of the interest groups on public life. This position was in line with the anti-establishment politics developed by the party, which attacked the diffusion of the so-called *Proporz* system in Austria. This system had become widespread under the Great Coalition governments and implied an even distribution of the most politically influential posts among the members of the two major parties, the SPÖ and the ÖVP.⁷⁷

The FPÖ also wanted a structural reform of the public sector and a lean and more effective organization of the state. In 1997, the party described the public administration as 'the most expensive' and 'protected sector, for which the state spends a continually growing part of its budget (FPÖ 1997: 22). To regulate the situation it was suggested that:

The savings in the public sector must be realized by a substantial reduction in the number of rules, by deregulation, by the introduction of cost accounting, by a better and more objective selection of executive personnel, by a concentration and simplification of procedures, by the delegation of decision making and by incentives for reducing costs in administration'.

On the tax issue, the FPÖ has always favoured lowering of taxes and creation of tax incentives, considering these measures the best way to fuel Austrian private entrepreneurship. However, the party did not protest against taxes as such and did not instigate anti-tax rallies as for instance the Northern League in Italy when the party was at the opposition. The FPÖ favoured lower tax pressure and in particular lower taxes to small and medium enterprises. For this reason, the FPÖ's profile on the economic dimension fits well into the neo-liberal interpretation, but less to that of an anti-tax party.

⁷⁷This went together with a strengthening of a number of interest groups with mandatory membership (e.g. for workers, employers, farmers) in the legislative process, which meant that hardly any legislation was passed without widespread consensus. The FPÖ was against this practice, against which the party supported a process of widespread privatization in the Austrian economy.

In recent years the FPÖ has partly changed this profile. Economic liberalism today goes along with the emphasis that the FPÖ has started to give to social issues (cf. FPÖ 2008). The FPÖ today describes itself as a Heimat and social party. This recent development has created an ideological combination in which a regulated liberalism that includes privatisation and low taxes is combined with support for the Austrian welfare state. In one of the recent documents, the FPÖ asserts to 'profess itself to the liberal and human society and to the Austrian welfare state' (FPÖ 2008). The Austrian welfare state is described as a 'joint and agreeing community that has its duties', consisting primarily in preserving the individual from the risks that emerge or can emerge in the course of life 'with age, handicap, sickness, misfortune of some kind, unemployment and ill-fated events to the Austrian citizens' (FPÖ 2008: 50). The same document emphasises that social rights are to be considered conditional on effective control against social abuse and against privileges. The unemployment among immigrants is seen as one of the most onerous costs for the Austrian welfare state, making its existence in the future very precarious, unless more rigorous restrictions are approved by the government (FPÖ 2008: 52). According to the FPÖ, if something is not done today, the 'welfare state cannot be financed and the bills of hundred and thousand seniors' pensions in Austria cannot be safe anymore', because 'the doors to the Austrian welfare state are wide open to looting'. Immigrants are in these paragraphs on welfare and in several other places in the document regarded as welfare state abusers, taking advantage of a relaxed legislation that gives them access to social benefits. According to the party, this makes them subjects living at the expenses of the Austrian state and citizens.

The measures suggested by the FPÖ to limit immigration include rigid quotas of immigrant labour based on the effective need of the labour market and harsher rules in the assignment of working and residence permits in general (cf. FPÖ 2008: 53). The entrance of foreign labour, *Gastarbeiter*s as the FPÖ prefers to call the immigrants coming to Austria to work, is then always conditional on the internal demand and exclusively when it is otherwise impossible to employ Austrian citizens. Also in this respect the Austrian party has come closer to the position of the Danish People's Party and to the Northern League.

The FPÖ's position on welfare is therefore characterised by the same welfare chauvinism that we have seen developed by the Danish People's Party. Particularly in the most recent phase, the party has given more emphasis to pro-welfare issues than to neo-liberal and welfare retrenchment issues. This strategy has watered down the FPÖ's earlier neo-liberal character. As mentioned, the party prefers today to define itself as a patriotic, liberal and social party (cf. FPÖ 2008: 97). The social standpoint is exclusively addressed to safeguard the interests of the 'own people and own state', which unquestionably come first. The liberal position has thus been adjusted in relation to the Austrian welfare state, but the party continues to support forms of privatisation, considering public intervention limited and necessary only where individual activity cannot effectively and efficiently intervene. In relation to taxes, the FPÖ de-

clares that the party ‘basic principle on economics is to relieve the tax pressure on the citizens’ considering lower taxes the precondition for a blooming economy’ (FPÖ 2008: 103).

7.3 ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT POLITICS

During the late 1980s and 1990s the Austrian voters started to show increasing disaffection with the way the two major parties ruled and particularly with consociational and corporatist practices that had allowed the parties to dispose of the proportional allocation of civil service jobs (*Proporz*).

Under the leadership of Jörg Haider, the FPÖ promoted itself as the only parliamentary force that could seriously challenge the domination by ÖVP and SPÖ. The party demanded and supported a project of radical transformation in Austrian politics. The critique against the power concentrated in the hands of the political elite became one of the central issues debated by the FPÖ during the late 1980s and until the party’s entry in government in 2000. The FPÖ described Austria as a country ruled by an undemocratic system, in which corporate elements, privileges and corruption dominated unhindered among the political elite (cf. FPÖ 1986).

In the 1990s, the FPÖ developed a more concrete plan based on the concept of creating a Third Republic to replace the Second Republic that was founded in the post-war years. Only a radical transformation of the status quo would in fact grant the change the FPÖ wanted and described as the passage from ‘a party state to a citizens’ democracy’. Among the proposals of political and social renewal, the FPÖ urged the introduction of more popular referenda, for the direct election of the federal president, for a significant reduction of the number of ministries and for more power to the provinces and local councils. In line with several other radical and populist parties, the FPÖ launched itself as a popular movement engaged in ‘a battle against a system of oppression’ (FPÖ 1993).

The protest and anti-establishment politics gained momentum in the course of the 1990s, in particular among FPÖ voters. When asked about the most important reasons for voting for the FPÖ, the voters first mentioned clear anti-establishment themes such as the disclosure of irregularities and scandals, the wish for a breath of fresh air in Austrian politics and the rejection of the Great Coalition (cf. Plasser & Ulram 2000: 37; Luther 2007: 19).

However, as in the other cases of radical right parties with government responsibility, the FPÖ’s advantages in opposition proved less effective while the party was in office. In particular, the party had difficulties sustaining the image of an anti-establishment political force working against the status quo. The tension arising from being in government and at the same time maintaining the critical line against the establishment created serious problems within the party’s own ranks and more specifically between the FPÖ cabinet members and the grassroots. Disagreement with the reforms decided by the government and endorsed by the FPÖ grew among the rank and file. The ‘hard-liners’ accused the party members in government of sacrificing FPÖ principles and positions to remain in office. This showed that the political pragmatism and the politics of compromise resulting from the FPÖ’s direct engagement in

government activity and decision making processes destabilised the internal balances. The exit of some of the most prominent FPÖ government members indicated the difficulties tackling government responsibility and the inevitable pragmatic decisions. The events triggered parliamentary elections already in November 2002, less than two years after the formation of the first black and blue government.

The FPÖ entered the 2002 electoral campaign divided and without any clear party strategy. Significantly, the 2002 electoral programme put emphasis on the results achieved in the few years in government and in particular on fields like employment, immigration, asylum policy and law and order (cf. FPÖ 2002). The programme, entitled 'Social and worth living in and possible' (*Sozial und Lebenswert und Leistbar*), attempted to dissociate the party from some of the unpopular reforms implemented by the government.

The second ÖVP-FPÖ government showed strong continuity with the reform policies that had characterised the period 2000-2002 (cf. Fraser 2007: 15-16). The FPÖ tried to exert a stronger pressure on the ÖVP to influence more directly the decisions of the government on a series of relevant policy reforms such as pensions and privatisation of public enterprises. The efforts were more or less in vain, also because the FPÖ had a much weaker electoral backup than in 2000. Moreover, the SPÖ showed to be more open to cooperate with the government, and voted for resolutions on education policy issues and even more controversially, for the enactment of a highly restrictive asylum policy in 2004 (see below).

When in 2005 all FPÖ cabinet members and most of the parliamentary group left the party to launch the BZÖ, the rest of the FPÖ was suddenly again in opposition. Under the new leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache, the FPÖ resolutely returned to vote maximising strategies that again emphasised its anti-establishment positions. This, together with the renewed radicalisation on other issues, seemed to pay back in electoral terms, as the party most recent results at the polls quite clearly indicate.

7.4 THE ANTI-IMMIGRATION ISSUE

7.4.1 The FPÖ and the anti-immigration issue

Before the 1980s, immigration was not an issue of strong relevance in Austrian politics (see Gärtner 2002), even though migration of foreign workers to Austria dated back to the 1960s. But neither the grand coalitions at government, nor the individual ÖVP and SPÖ governments had made serious attempts to discuss the issue.

As in Western countries that had experienced the phenomenon (e.g. Denmark), the guest workers that came to Austria in the 1960s and 1970s were expected to leave as soon as the country did not need them anymore. In order to ensure this, immigration of guest workers was based on a rotation system; immigrants were supposed to stay for a short period of time in order to cover the specific demand for labour and to leave again. But for several reasons, thing did not go this way. Migrants wanted to stay longer because their income had not met their expectations and employers often refused to recruit new inexperienced workers, prefer-

ring to keep those who were already trained. As mostly male immigrants decided to stay longer in the country, family unification raises the number of immigrants in the country. This phase of immigration profoundly changed the structure of the foreign population. Austria became an immigration country with a high percentage of immigrants relative to the size of its population. However, this status has rather surprisingly never become part of Austria's official self-understanding (Fassmann & Münz 1995). Even in periods of significant immigration, the political discourse held on to notions of *Zuwanderung*, thus emphasising the transitory state of immigration, rather than on the concept of *Einwanderung*, which also implies permanent settlement of immigrants. Integration was considered as the unifying policy objective in relation to immigrants, which served to distract from the fact that Austria was already a country of immigration. Moreover, the opening of the borders to Eastern Europe had a clearly augmented the number of immigrants.

The attitudes towards immigration and immigrants changed during the late 1980s and in the 1990s. Immigration became an increasingly relevant issue on the voters' political agenda. Before 1989, immigration was not even on the list of the most important problems, but in 1990 it was number 10 on the list of the most important things the government had to take care of. In 1992, the issue was number 2 on the political agenda of the Austrian electorate (cf. Gärtner 2002).

When Jörg Haider became leader of the FPÖ, anti-immigration position became increasingly important on the party agenda. In a document presented in 1990 entitled 'Resolution on the immigration question' (cf. FPÖ, Resolution zur Ausländerfrage 1990), the party listed some measures that were considered necessary to regulate immigration and asylum in the country. The document was published in the controversial right-wing paper *Aula*, whose promoters in those years had close relations with members of the FPÖ (cf. Gärtner 1995: 308).

In 1993, the FPÖ launched a popular initiative on the topic of immigration called 'Austria First!' (cf. FPÖ Österreich Zuerst! 1993). The aim was to collect signatures in favour of a popular referendum on the subject based on twelve demands of restrictions and control in relation to immigration. The initiative was considered very controversial and provoked the exit of five party MPs, among them Heide Schmidt, who later launched the new party Liberal Forum (LiF). In the same year, relations between FPÖ and the Liberal International group – of which the party was a member since 1979 – became more difficult. In 1993, the Liberal International executive recommended the expulsion of the FPÖ from its ranks, but the measure was preceded by the decision of the FPÖ to withdraw its membership.

Asserting that 'Austria is not a country of immigration' (cf. Österreich Zuerst! 1993), the party asked to introduce this concept as a constitutional provision. The FPÖ was very straightforward on this and thought that Austria had to stop immigration, explaining that 'on account of its size and density of population' the country 'was not a country of immigration'. The FPÖ suggested a number of clear and concrete demands: introduction of more rigorous measures against immigration, including more efficient border controls and expansion of the

police force in order to prevent illegal immigration and control crime. The demands also included a restriction of the rules for achieving Austrian citizenship, tougher measures against immigrants abusing social benefits and a limitation of the percentage (max 30 pct.) of students with another mother tongue in Austrian school classes.

The immigration petition fell far behind the party's expectations, reaching less than 10 pct. of the electorate (about 400,000 signatures) and it was considered a failure. But even so, the initiative put immigration on the political agenda of the mainstream parties. In the same years, the SPÖ-ÖVP government coalition decided to pass a number of restrictive measures for the immigrants already living in Austria. Immigrants were required to send to the authorities documented information about their working permit, health insurance certificate and a detailed account of their housing conditions (cf. Sully 1997: 79). The enactment of these measures showed that the government parties were concerned about FPÖ's attempt to mobilise the electorate on the immigration question and feared that the FPÖ could take a leading role on the issue if the government did not tighten the rules.

At the anticipated elections of 1995, less than a year after, the FPÖ continued to campaign on the topics that now characterised the party main political issues. One was anti-establishment politics, the other was anti-immigration. In the programmatic platform entitled 'Contract with Austria', the FPÖ presented a list of 20 pledges that the party – when it took office – would realize within the first 100 days. As for immigration the party made some concrete promises:

The existing immigration laws should not be softened. Each potential immigrant must prove to have a job and an accommodation. To enable the return of numerous illegal immigrants we propose ID requirements such as exist in most industrial countries today. The current practice of granting citizenship well before the legally required ten years should also be stopped.

As the Danish People's Party and the Northern League, the Freedom Party reacted rapidly to a situation in which the electorate showed increasing concern about the impact and consequences of the immigration flows on the Austrian society at large. At the same time, the political establishment seemed unable to work out a plan that could act in response to the new developments in the field of immigration and integration.

7.4.2 Immigration policies under the FPÖ and ÖVP governments (2000-2006)

Significantly and quite similarly to the Italian and Danish cases, FPÖ's influence on migration and asylum policies became evident with the achievement of political influence. Under both the ÖVP and FPÖ coalition governments (2000-2006) led by chancellor Schüssel, several restrictive amendments were made in relation to the country's migration regime and integration policies. In July 2002 the parliament approved the so-called Integration Agreement (*Integrationsvereinbarung*), introducing the obligation for non-EU migrants applying for a residence permit in Austria to acquire a basic knowledge of the German language and enough

abilities to participate in the social, economic and cultural life in Austria. In practice, this implied following a compulsory course that had to start within the first 2 years of arrival in the country and completing it successfully within the first 4 years of permanence. Non-completion of the course would then give rise to a number of sanctions, such as a fine for refusing integration, or refusal of residence permit (cf. Kamali 2008: 80 also for the critique that followed the implementation of the agreement).

By 2005, the Austrian National Council approved the introduction of new significant changes to the Asylum Act, for instance the controversial measure of force-feeding asylum seekers during hunger strikes and the wide range of authorizations given to the police force, such as the right to expel asylum seekers despite a pending trial. This lowered the number of new asylum applications from 32,000 in 2003 to the 13,300 in 2006.

The most comprehensive ‘package’ on immigration issues (*Fremdenrechtspaket*) was approved by the government in 2005. This regarded different fields of migration and included significant reforms contained in four new acts: the settlement and residence act, the alien’s police act and foreign labour act. The government explained the enactment of the package as a necessary piece of legislation to implement the EU directives in the field, but it was also a way to strengthen the measures against immigration in light of the EU enlargement to the Eastern countries (cf. Krzyzanowsky & Wodak 2008: 47).

The restrictions introduced under the ÖVP-FPÖ government regarded different aspects related to the conditions of entry, rules of settlement and residence and requirements for obtaining Austrian citizenship. As in the Danish and Italian cases, the legitimization of the radical right and the achievement of political influence had concrete effects, particularly on the immigration regimes of these countries.

7.4.3 The politics of exclusion: From the right to a cultural identity (Heimat) to the FPÖ as Heimatpartei

To understand the position of the FPÖ in relation to immigration it is important to explain the meaning that the party has given to the concept of *Heimat* through the years. This notion is present in most of the party programmes and in several official documents released between 1985 and 2008. *Heimat* is a German word which is difficult to translate and which in English can indicate both the homeland and a more general notion of cultural identity. It is not the place here to dig theoretically deep into this concept. It can be helpful to remark that in discourse analysis this can be referred to as a ‘nodal point’, whose function is to create and sustain the identity of a certain discourse by constructing a knot of definite meaning (Torring 1999: 98). In this sense, the nodal point, here represented by the *Heimat*, has been loaded with contents and meanings that have been used to develop politics of belonging and exclusion.

Together with the idea of individual freedom the concept of *Heimat* therefore plays a central role in defining FPÖ’s ideology. Its full commitment to the Austrian nation, its culture, values, principles and tradition is formulated very early in the policy agendas. The concept of

Heimat has developed and changed over time and in relation to the different phases of the party's life-cycle. At the beginning, *Heimat* indicated mainly patriotic feelings of national belonging and identity that were influenced by a pan-German vision of the national question, whose main goal was considered the reunification of all German-speaking and ethnic-German (*Volksdeutsche*) people.

For example, the 1985 programme stated that the FPÖ 'regard[s] the democratic republic of Austria as (our) mother country in which the values of national tradition and love of one's country are to be highly valued'. This had to take place in respect of the basic rights, identities and co-existence of the different ethnic (autochthonous) groups living in the country (cf. FPÖ 1985 in Sully 1997:45). But only a few passages further, it was specified that 'the overwhelming majority of Austrians belong to the German ethnic and cultural community' and therefore the party wanted '(...) an Austria embedded within the German ethnic and cultural region, to autonomously shape its future' (cf. FPÖ 1985 in Sully 1997: 46).

Yet in the following years the FPÖ downplayed the pan-German nationalist claims, in particular in its official documents. In 'Theses for the political renewal of Austria' from 1993, the framing of *Heimat* was more blurred. The purpose of the party is '(...) to preserve and maintain the natural environment and cultural heritage inherited from our forefathers in order to hand them on to our descendants'. The party defined this approach as a 'positive form of patriotism', which 'thoroughly promotes the idea of being European' (cf. in Sully 1997: 50). However, the document was also rather explicit that 'Austria is for Austrians' and 'the protection of cultural identity and social peace in Austria requires a stop to immigration' (Sully 1997: 51) – hence the need to apply more rigorous border controls and to fight illegal immigration more effectively.

From the 1990s the concept of *Heimat* evolved into an exclusionary right to the homeland (see e.g. Gärtner 2000). This approach allowed the party to argue that the main question was not about being against foreigners, but rather about safeguarding the interests and cultural identity of the historical indigenous groups. This was for example clearly underlined in the 1997 FPÖ programme, where the party strived to defend a specific version of Austrian patriotism and idea of homeland (FPÖ 1997: 7):

Our country [Heimat] is the democratic Republic of Austria and its federal states, including the historically settled indigenous groups (Germans, Croats, Roma, Slovaks, Slovenians, Czechs and Hungarians) and the culture moulded by them. The legal system in Austria presupposes that the overwhelming majority of Austrians is of German origin.

The definition of 'Austrian' referred to the country's different historical ethnic groups (*ethnische Volksgruppen*), even if the reference to the German-speaking majority was not forgotten in the text.

The characteristic Austrian cultural identity that originated in the different historical autochthonous groups was thus something that needed to (FPÖ 1997:):

be preserved, protected and developed in these spatial, historical groupings and cultural aspects.(...) The coexistence and collaboration of the different cultural groups have formed Austria's characteristic identity, which can only be preserved through a guaranteed continuing existence of the historical settled cultural groups.

The paragraph above was followed by the explanation that due to its small size, population density and limited resources 'Austria is not a country of immigration' and therefore the right to a homeland or *Heimat* is reserved only to the country's historical ethnic groups. The FPÖ was thus against 'unlimited immigration', as this would 'endanger the right to preservation and protection of the *Heimat*' and therefore rejected any form of 'multicultural experiments' for the social conflicts that these involve.

The *Heimat* in the reading of the FPÖ was also intrinsically related to Western and Christian values, principles and culture. Already the 1997 policy agenda underlined that 'the intellectual foundations of the West included the ideal of human dignity and basic liberties as well as ideas deriving from this, such as democracy, codetermination, rule of law, solidarity and respect for life and creation' (FPÖ 1997: 9).

It was also emphasized that these foundations had to be defended against the dangers from 'different streams of thought'; here the party quoted for example the fundamentalism of radical Islam, but also the culture of hedonistic consumption, aggressive capitalism, growing occultism, pseudo-religious sects and omnipresent nihilism. In the 1997 programme the party expressed a careful formulation of what concretely threatened and endangered the nation. In particular, the reference to Islam was limited to its radical and fundamentalist expressions.

This is not the case in the party's recent official publications. Today the FPÖ clearly defines itself as a social and Heimat party⁷⁸ (*Die Soziale Heimatpartei*), which emphasises the role of the party as guarantor of the Austrian identity and social welfare. In the *Manual of the Freedomites' Politics* an entire chapter is dedicated to 'Heimat and Identity' (FPÖ 2008: 21-43). Already from the introduction, the approach to the concept of *Heimat* is given a new and thicker meaning in relation to the past. As explained above, in 1997 the *Heimat* was still a rather blurred concept defined in spatial-geographical, ethno-historical and cultural ways, whose foundations and existence had to be protected. In the more recent party literature, the cultural and value approach has gained ground in relation to this debate. The geographical and territorial space is today increasingly associated to a leading monocultural vision of the Austrian society, connected to ideas of western cultural superiority. An introductory passage to the chapter asserts that the FPÖ's main goal is 'to protect the Austrian leading culture (*Leitkultur*), the homeland (*Heimat*) and the autochthonous population' against the main threat represented by immigration, because 'Austria is not a country of immigration' (FPÖ 2008a:

⁷⁸ The definition was first introduced by FPÖ politician Hans Tschürtz in 2005 when he defined the party as a 'social Heimat and control party' (see <http://oesterreich.orf.at/burgenland/stories/176457/> last accessed: 29-03-2009)

21). A little later it is explained that ‘Austria needs neither Americanisation nor Islamisation. The western culture is rich and varied. It connects the European cultural nations. It is then necessary to support and to further develop our own culture’ (FPÖ 2008: 21).

In the passage above it is worth noticing that the FPÖ mentions both Americanization and Islamization as leading to the demise of the Austrian culture and more generally of the Western civilization.⁷⁹ But even if the Americanization of the Austrian society is here mentioned among the concerns for the country’s present social and political development, the greatest threat remains Islam and immigration.

The party considers the future of the *Heimat* seriously threatened in particular by the increasing number of Muslims in the country. In several passages, the document explicitly refers to reliable sources (academic, scientific, statistical) to support its statements and theses. For example, to support the thesis of a developing Islamization of the Austrian society the FPÖ document quotes the conclusions of a report by the Austrian *Akademie der Wissenschaften* on the ‘New projections for the Austrian population after religious denomination’:

The structure of the denominational milieu in Austria has changed in recent years (...) the two groups of the Muslims and of the non religious have increased. (...) In all the calculations it is possible to observe a further decline of members of the Roman-Catholic church. (...) Likely the group of the Muslims will grow stronger.

The numerical increase is thus automatically related to the identity, cultural and value challenge. The clash between the Islamic and Christian Western cultures is then described by the party as embedded in the very view of the world and in social behaviour. Islam is considered to hinder individual freedom, human rights and equality, in particular for Muslim women. There is no opening to an understanding of culture in a relational and dynamic framework. Moreover, like the Danish People’s Party (see Chapter 5), the Freedom Party tries today to champion liberal values (solidarity, minority women rights, freedom of speech, animal welfare and so forth) by creating several ‘contrast pictures’ in which the intolerant, anti-libertarian and chauvinist approach of Islam is compared to the tolerant, secularised and modern Western and Christian society.

This is not necessarily done in a stereotyped way. In the document ‘We and Islam’, for instance, the two sections entitled ‘Islam is a monotheist world religion that deserves our respect’ and ‘The geopolitical importance of Islam must be accepted’ (FPÖ 2008b), present Islam and the Islamic culture as realities that have significantly contributed to the world’s cultural and scientific progress. However, a more careful reading of the rest of the document shows that the thesis remains that the conflicts emerge when the two cultures meet as a result of what the party considers the massive immigration from Muslim countries. In reality, and

⁷⁹ Something more about the anti-American position of the FPÖ will be said in relation to the party positioning on foreign policy. For a recent analysis of how anti-Americanism and American-criticism have developed in Austria since the XIX century (see Bischof 2007).

indeed quite in conflict with what was just said, in the following reflections about ‘Us and Islam’ it is avowed that ‘it must be explained to what extent the Muslim tradition and the European democracy and constitutional understanding can be combined’ (FPÖ 2008b).

Muslims are considered difficult to integrate because they refer to a backward society. The party suggests different practical political measures to promote integration of Muslim immigrants and to prevent radicalization of some of its components, among these: the education and formation of the imams in the country and the obligation to preach only in German in the mosques; surveillance of educational material and teaching in Islamic schools; a ban on building minarets to be introduced in the Austrian federal constitution; stronger control of activities in the mosques, considered recruiting places of radical elements; ban on wearing the Muslim veil in the public space; a declaration of compliance with the laws and with democracy when obtaining Austrian citizenship; harder sentences for honour killings, forced marriages and genital mutilations. As seen in the previous chapters, these are issues that have been intensively discussed by the Danish People’s Party. Furthermore and in this way more similarly to the Northern League, the FPÖ refers to the need to defend the Christian roots and heritage of the West against Islam’s attempt to take the control of the Christian world.

7.5 AUTHORITARIANISM AND CONFORMIST VIEWS OF THE WORLD

7.5.1 Authoritarian attitudes, law and order and security issues

The Austrian Freedom Party has historical roots that date back to the 1950s. As we have seen above, the party went through significant ideological transformation, renewal and restructurings during the 1980s and 1990s. Even so, much of the scholarly research the FPÖ describes the party as an extreme right wing party with authoritarian and anti-libertarian features. Concepts of *Volksgemeinschaft*, criticism of democracy, the relativisation of the National Socialist past, the belief in an autocratic leadership and authoritarian state are often mentioned when referring to FPÖ’s ideology. These explanations are partly based on the party’s historical background and ideological roots, partly on the biographical records of some of the party’s leadership members and on discourses, statements and comments made by Jörg Haider when he was leading the party and by other prominent FPÖ members. However, looking at the way the party ideology has developed in the past two decades and specifically at how authoritarian attitudes and law and order issues are dealt with, the FPÖ’s positions are in many ways not so different from those of the Danish People’s Party and the Northern League. And in their case, there are no direct historical roots or heritage in post-war fascism.

As observed in relation to the Danish People’s Party and the Northern League, the Freedom Party supports a hard line on law and order and national security. In the 1993 popular petition *Austria First!*, the FPÖ asked for the expansion of the police force and permanent border controls. The 1997 policy agenda included a chapter entitled ‘Law and order. There is no freedom without law and there can be no law without justice’ (FPÖ 1997:). The party urged the state to adopt a more decisive interventionist line against crime, terrorism, smug-

gling and worldwide drug trafficking. According to the party, life imprisonment must imply what it says. At the same time the party is against the death penalty, because the risk of executing innocent persons is too high (cf. FPÖ 1997: 20 and FPÖ 2008: 142).

Immigrant and refugees are often mentioned in relation to crime, illegal conduct and abuse. Therefore one demand is an efficient border police force that is able to counter and control 'the flood of illegal immigrants and those engaged in smuggling refugees' (FPÖ 1997: 19).

The demand for more law and order, for example by expanding the police force and its intervention on the local scale to prevent crime is thus a common issue championed by the radical right regardless of historical legacies. Particularly after 9/11, the demands for more police and control were intensified by these parties also in relation to the threat represented by the radicalisation of Islamic elements within society and by international terrorism.

It is difficult to find direct references in the recent FPÖ ideology to antidemocratic and autocratic views of the state. The party has supported plebiscitary forms of democracy and the use of more direct instruments of popular democracy. In the mid 1990s the FPÖ asked explicitly to concentrate greater decisional power in the hands of the Austrian federal president, whose election had to be directly decided by people, together with that of the provincial governors and mayors. The concentration of power in the hands of the federal president would have made redundant the post of government chancellor and according to this plan the government should then be reduced to only seven ministers elected by the parliament after hearings. The principle of direct election of the highest organs of the state also appears in later party documents (cf. FPÖ 1997: 16-17). However, the same demands for forms of more direct democracy in the country, concretely translated into instruments of popular initiatives, such as referenda and direct ballots, are common to several other radical right parties (for example the Northern League). These demands have to be read in the perspective of these parties' populist and anti-establishment positions, which are generally stronger when the party is in opposition. Their position is generally less confrontational as soon as they reach government responsibilities and political influence.

7.5.2 Family, children and sexuality

The Austrian Freedom Party considers the traditional family the social core of Austrian society. This position has emerged together with the party's in support of the Christian foundations of Europe and the church and which changed the FPÖ's more liberal and open approach to the composition and social function of the family. This clearly emerges from the definitions that we find in the party documents before and after the late 1990s. The FPÖ 1985 policy platform regards the family 'as the most important element in the community' adding that 'all families deserve the protection of society' and that 'the demands of the family and its autonomy' must be respected. The approach in the 1997 policy agenda is different, the family is defined as 'the common life between a man and a woman, which finds a special expression in

society through the institution of marriage' and if an addition concedes that also 'sole parents with children are to be regarded as families' the party rejects any 'effort that equates homosexual partnerships with families'⁸⁰ (FPÖ 1997: 25; see also FPÖ 2005: 23).

The party's approach to the role of women in society emphasises gender equality. The equal role, equal opportunities and equal standing of men and women in society and their 'equality in their degree of responsibility' (cf. FPÖ 1985) were aspects that the party emphasised in the documents of the 1980s. By the end of the 1990s, the FPÖ started to take a more traditional line, for example by appealing to more 'family-friendly' social policies that could help in particular 'women who spend their time bringing up children or caring for family members' (FPÖ 1997: 26; FPÖ 2005: 23). The greater attention in the 1990s to the role of Christianity and to the relationship with the church challenged to some extent the early position on gender equality. On the one side the approach continued favour increasing gender equality, and on the other side the more traditional role and responsibilities of the woman as mother and wife gained some place in the way the party discussed family and social policies. It is a 'tension' that can be noted also in relation to moral issues, such as abortion, euthanasia, genetic technology and the like, on which the party has adopted a more conformist position.

In recent years the party has amplified and extended the gender equality issue by relating it to Muslim women's rights. Quite similarly to the Danish People's Party, the FPÖ mentions forced marriages, genital mutilations and the wearing of the Muslim veil as fundamental barriers to equal rights to all women in society. At the same time, the party underlines the problem of the decreasing birth rate in the country, urging Austrian women to give birth to more children (at least two) to prevent the Austrian population from 'becoming a minority in (their) own Heimat' (cf. FPÖ 2008: 82).

7.6 EU AND FOREIGN POLICY

7.6.1 *The FPÖ on EU: from support to scepticism*

Austria is a late joiner in the EU. Despite the country's economic and ideological western orientation it did not apply for the EU membership until 1989 and it became an official member as late as 1994. The country's history and geopolitical situation helps to explain this decision (cf. Pelinka 2004). Like Germany, the Austrian territory was after 1945 divided into four occupational zones, of which one-third was militarily controlled by the Soviet troops and the remaining two-thirds by the Allied forces. However and in this differently from Germany, Austria had only a single national government, which was based on a western style liberal democracy (see Pelinka 2004: 210). In 1955 the country signed the State Treaty, which provided for the withdrawal of the four allied powers on the condition that the state became a permanently neutral country in accordance to the Swiss model. This decision was taken in

⁸⁰ However, the declarations on the issue are limited to denying homosexuals the same family rights as heterosexual couples, but the party has never expressed positions that could indicate discriminating attitudes against homosexuals.

consideration of Austria's geopolitical position. The country occupied a strategic 'front-line' between the European East and the West, whose borders during the Cold War were even more markedly defined by the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The perception that, due to its neutrality, the country had to refrain from getting involved in the sphere of Western European military cooperation, was felt also in relation to the Western European economic integration. During the Cold War, Austria continued to be economically and ideologically oriented towards Western Europe. At the end of the Cold War, most of the reservations related to the country's strategic geopolitical position lost significance and in 1989 the country applied for EU membership.

As underlined by Pelinka (2004: 214), the vote in the Austrian EU referendum showed sensible socioeconomic differences. Lower levels of support to the EU were found amongst the younger generations, women and voters with lower education. This reflected the differences among the Austrian parties between the EU positive and EU sceptical parties (see also Chapter 8). The FPÖ and the Greens were the two parties that opposed Austrian EU membership; at the time both parties had a strong appeal among the younger cohorts and the FPÖ particularly among voters with lower educational levels. In the following years the Greens (*Grüne*) adopted a more positive attitude towards EU, whereas the FPÖ's position on EU has grown more sceptical during the last decade.

In reality, the Austrian Freedom Party was in favour of Austria's EU membership until the beginning of the 1990s. The 1985 policy agenda affirmed that 'the future of Europe lies in a close community of all its countries and peoples. In spite of all the difficulties of unification the goal remains a unified and strong Europe to which there is no reasonable alternative' (FPÖ 1985 in Sully 1997: 46)

For the party, the unification of Europe was a way to safeguard and guarantee the political and economic survival and to ensure peace in the world. However, last step to unification was the creation of a 'European confederation' in which people had to preserve their identity and their right to self-determination. In 1994, the FPÖ officially asked its MPs to vote against the ratification of the Treaty that the Austrian government had signed with the EU.

In the 'Theses for the political renewal of Austria', the position towards Europe started to be strongly conditioned by the demand for a sovereign Austria in a pan-European confederation of states. This introduced the preference for a confederalist model in relation to the form and functioning of European cooperation that at the same time warned against the creation of a European super-state implying the loss of independence and national sovereignty. Today this interpretation characterises the approach to EU of most of the radical right (cf. Mudde 2007: 165-169).

In the 1997 policy agenda, in Chapter VI on 'Europe – a common destiny' (FPÖ 1997: 9-11) the 'limits' to European integration are more directly defined:

The future destiny of Europe has to be shaped through close cooperation of its peoples. Politically Europe is represented only partly by the European Union. Europe's diversity calls for forms of political cooperation which envisage different confederations on different levels. The independence of states should be restricted only by what is absolutely necessary to reach specific goals (...) The European Union is just a part of the European reality. The European Union shall not become a European federal state but a confederation.

It was not clearly specified what form of European confederation the party more concretely wanted. Often the alternative is based exclusively on what Europe should not do and on few indications about the policy areas where European cooperation is accepted, for example on security and control in relation to international crime and illegal immigration. In 1998, the FPÖ was against Austria's participation in the European Monetary Union and organized a popular initiative against replacing the Austrian shilling with the euro.⁸¹

The EU sceptical position developed by the FPÖ in the 1990s created some difficulties in 2000, when the party entered government with the EU positive ÖVP. In this respect, it was easier for the party to be critical of EU when it was in opposition, whereas it became difficult to see what kind of implications this could have for the country and the country's politics when the FPÖ got into office in 2000. This implied taking concrete decisions and standpoints in relation to EU policy that could strongly affect the position of the country in the EU. Therefore, one of the pragmatic initiatives of the new government, also to respond to the diplomatic sanctions imposed by the other EU countries on Austria, was to make an official declaration of the government's commitment to Europe. In the 'Government declaration' by Austrian chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel of February 2000, the new government clearly wants to reassure the other EU members of Austria' and particularly the FPÖ's position:

Our government programme identifies itself resolutely with Europe and with the fundamental values which characterise the new Europe. We are Austrians and we are European and proud of it. The Austrian population has expressed this in the last five years and in the high electoral vote for the membership (...) There is no alternative to the participation in the EU. Participation in the monetary union was the last important progress. (...) And Austria has another unique historical opportunity with the enlargement of the European Union. (...) The federal government strongly commits to a common security and defence policy and to peace in Europe' (ÖVP-FPÖ Regierungserklärung 2000).

That the newly formed government listened to Europe was also seen in Haider's decision to resign – at least formally – as FPÖ party leader and to elect in his place the less controversial Susanne Riess-Passer. Haider declined any cabinet post, declaring that he would concentrate on his position as governor in the Kärnten region. However, even if Haider continued to maintain strong control on the party, the effects of government responsibility started to be felt at different levels of the FPÖ's politics. In particular, the leadership in government started to

⁸¹ The referendum campaign for the Austrian shilling (*Schilling-Volksabstimmung*) was held from November 24 to December 1. The FPÖ managed to collect 'only' 253,949 signatures. This was just one of several referendum campaigns organized by the party over the years.

carry out politics that were not in accordance with the ideological positions held by the party before coming into office and thus conflicted with Haider and the party rank and file. They still considered it possible to combine participation in government with anti-establishment politics. But by getting into government, the party had lost appeal among the protest voters. The party members in government believed that the concrete records achieved would have helped the party consolidate support from the electorate, for example in relation to EU policy. In 2002, Susanne Riess-Passer asked for the party's commitment to the EU enlargement. This was not appreciated by Haider and the rank and file, which continued to show reservations in relation to the EU integration process, particularly the effects of the enlargement on the Austrian labour market. The FPÖ was clearly suffering the strains of the conflict between the fundamental party ideology and the short-term, pragmatic and inevitably concretely targeted political goals (cf. Chapter 3). It is the same constraints that we have seen in the case of the northern League and which the Danish People's Party was to some extent able to contain in its position as support to the government coalition rather than a direct member.

The intra-party conflict ended with the resignation of some of the party most prominent government members and ministers at the Knittelfeld meeting. As a consequence new early elections were called by chancellor Schüssel in November 2002. In the 2002 election campaign the FPÖ adopted again a critical position towards the European Union and the enlargement in particular. The slogan during the campaign was: 'EU critics vote blue. The FPÖ stands for an Austria without ifs and buts' (FPÖ 2002). The party declared to be against the enlargement claiming that it was necessary to wait for the new countries to reach the same levels of social welfare and environmental standards before joining the EU. The Temelin nuclear power plant located in the Czech Republic and close to the Austria border became one of the main issues explaining an Austrian veto against the enlargement.

At the 2002 election the FPÖ lost about two-thirds of its electoral support. In 2005, Haider and other ex-FPÖ members formed the BZÖ. In the following years, FPÖ's position on EU became more openly critical. This was facilitated by the fact that the FPÖ was no longer in government, since all members of the party who had been in government had shifted to the BZÖ.

At the 2006 parliamentary election, the FPÖ, now under the new leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache, emphasised the importance of preserving Austrian sovereignty and its neutrality in a Europe of fatherlands (*Europa der Vaterländer*) (cf. FPÖ 2006:10). Just like the Danish People's Party, the FPÖ did not reject Europe tout court, but pointed to the threats to national independence and problems of democratic deficit that are embedded in the European process. However, in recent documents the party describes the Austria's possible exit from the EU as 'not a taboo, but ultima ratio' (FPÖ 2008: 172) against the development of the European Union into a central state. The party also observes that an exit from the European Union does not mean an exit from Europe and that the European countries which at present do not belong to the EU 'are on average – measured in GDP per capita – considerably richer than

those which are part of the Union' (FPÖ 2008: 172) and here the party mentions Luxemburg, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland (before its financial and economic collapse).

As the Danish People's Party and the Northern League, the FPÖ has strongly and categorically opposed Turkish EU membership (cf. FPÖ 2006: 10 and FPÖ 2008: 173). Turkey is considered culturally far too different from Europe and therefore not an eligible member. For this reason the party argues that 'the accession negotiations with Turkey must stop and must be followed by the determination of the EU external borders' and in the end 'Turkey's access in the EU has to be followed by the immediate exit of Austria from EU' (FPÖ 2008: 173).

7.6.2 On Austrian neutrality, NATO and on the FPÖ anti-American position

FPÖ has also changed its position on NATO over the years. As mentioned, Austria's historical and geopolitical situation immediately following WWII did not allow the country to join NATO when it was established in 1949. At that time, one-third of the country's territory was still under the military control of Soviet troops, while the remaining two-thirds were controlled by the other Allied forces. Moreover, the alpine land did not have armed forces of its own and it occupied a strategic position between the East and the West. Under these conditions, NATO did not and could not ask Austria to join in. The possibility of Austrian NATO membership became even more remote in 1955, when the country signed the State Treaty, which provided for the withdrawal of the Allied troops from Austrian territory on the condition that the country became a permanently neutral state. In the following years and particularly during the Cold War, Austria maintained this specific position of 'non-engagement'; the country never joined NATO and – as described above – it became a member of the EEC/EU only after the end of the Cold War in 1995.

The Austrian EU membership changed also the perspective on NATO. In the late 1990s, joining the NATO became a concrete perspective for the neutral country. In those years, the FPÖ had a rather positive standpoint, which was quite clearly formulated by in the 1997 programme:

Neutrality as the dominant maxim of action in Austria's foreign policy has lost its function with the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the end of the Cold War. After entry into the UN in 1955 neutrality was given up step by step and became obsolete with EU accession in 1995. In addition, the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 has become irrelevant' (FPÖ 1997: 12).

According to the FPÖ, this called for a different approach to the country's security policy:

It is in the interest of Austria's security to have the protection of a functioning comprehensive defence system. That is why Austria should be a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union (WEU) and should actively participate in building up the European Security and Defence system (FPÖ 1997: 12).

The FPÖ's position expressed above was perhaps also a sign of the normalization and government seeking process that the party was evidently going through in the late 1990s. The opening towards NATO was also endorsed by the declaration of intents by the new ÖVP-FPÖ government in February 2000, in which chancellor Schüssel affirmed that the cooperation on security and defence policy at the European level in order to maintain peace was one of Austria's highest priorities and that this involved 'deepening the relations with NATO in order to open the possibility of a membership at a later point in time' (in ÖVP and FPÖ 2000).

The Freedom Party also seemed to have abandoned the anti-American sentiments and positions that had characterised some right wing environments in the 1970s and 1980s, but which had much earlier historical roots (cf. Bischof 2007). Similarly to the anti-American position and feelings in some left-wing milieus, the right wing's critique developed into two main directions: the hegemonic role of America in international politics against which Europe was considered to play almost the role of a colony and the American cultural assault on the European civilization, considered to corrupt the value and cultural system of Europe with its exploitative and consumerist capitalism and values.

However, at least in terms of FPÖ's official position, the party seemed to have developed a more positive attitude towards the US in the late 1980s and 1990s. This was partly also transmitted by Jörg Haider, who showed particular interest in the American electoral campaigning strategies.⁸² Things changed in 2003, when Haider visited Saddam Hussein in Iraq on the eve of the US attack on Iraq. Haider condemned US foreign policy and asserted that there was little difference between President George W. Bush and the Iraqi dictator (cf. Bischof 2007: 169). Haider's initiative was strongly criticised in particular by FPÖ's government members, but also indicated another readjustment of the party's politics.

The most recent FPÖ official documents show that the party has actually stepped back on most of the positions on foreign policy described above. Today the party not only rejects the prospect of Austria as a member of NATO, but has developed a very negative critique of USA's role in foreign policy and its (lack of) values and principle. These positions emerge clearly in the 'Manual of the freedomite politics' and 'We and Islam'. In the latter, the FPÖ attacks what the party considers the belligerent US foreign policy promoted by George Bush 'the warmonger' (*Kriegshetzer*), that particularly in the Middle East increased the level of violence. The FPÖ condemns 'the aggressive repressive politics of Israel against the Palestinians' asserting that the methods are 'inhuman and to be denounced', adding that the FPÖ 'supports the efforts of the Palestinians who want to live in their own state' (FPÖ 2008). This is a very different position on the Israeli-Palestinian question than the one developed by the other two parties, in particular by the Danish People's Party (see here chapter 5). The latter two parties consider Israel one of the last bastions of 'western civilization' resisting the Muslim threat (cf. also Betz and Meret 2009). The FPÖ seems to prefer the principle often as-

⁸² The FPÖ leadership was clearly inspired by Newt Gingrich in the party document '20 pledges for the contract with Austria' mentioned above (cf. also Bischof 2007: 169)

serted in its policy agendas claiming the basic right to their Heimat of the ‘historically settled cultural groups’, which is repeated when the party speaks about a Europe of fatherlands.

On the whole, the critique of the US role and the appeal to Europe to free itself from its subordinate position are specific positions developed by the FPÖ and which certainly distinguish the Austrian party today from the Danish People’s Party and the Northern League. In this respect, the FPÖ’s quest for a European identity and self-consciousness that has to respond to the cultural assaults against the European value system is somehow better fastened. Islam continues to represent the principal and most imminent threat to Western culture and values, but also other exogenous principles and values can, in the view of the party, corrupt and ruin the Christian European civilization. Undoubtedly the recent radicalization of the FPÖ’s positions must be considered in relation to the party’s return to opposition in Austrian politics, which has allowed it to recuperate and re-launch the image of an anti-establishment party defending the identity, values and principles of a Christian Europe.

Conclusions

Of the three parties considered in this study, the Freedom Party has gained the least from being in office from 2000 to 2005. The Austrian party was not able to take advantage of the circumstances once it became politically influential. Part of the explanation is to be found in the specific conditions that followed the FPÖ’s entry into government and in the party’s internal organisation. However, also in ideological terms, its participation in government implied political negotiations and concessions that directly affected the position of this party in Austrian politics and damaged its image among the party supporters.

Compared to the other two radical right parties, the FPÖ started its government experience under strong national and international pressure. From start, its politics seemed domesticated by the responsibilities of being in government and by the necessity of proving itself a reliable political partner. The first disappointment was of course that Jörg Haider did not manage to get into government. But also that in the 2000 declaration of intents, the newly formed ÖVP-FPÖ government had to take almost an oath of compliance to the European integration project. It was a bad start for the FPÖ, which impinged on the profile of an anti-establishment party working to change the status quo. Things did not get better with time. The tension between being a party with government responsibility and the attempt to keep a critical line against the politics of the establishment created serious problems also within the party’s own ranks. The FPÖ cabinet members were directly accused of sacrificing the party’s ideology and politics for real politics. The policies approved by the government did not meet the voters’ expectations. An example is immigration where only limited results were obtained in the first year the FPÖ was in office.

The party’s internal crisis took a sharp turn in 2002, when some of the FPÖ’s most prominent members in government resigned. This confirmed the party’s difficulties coping

with government responsibility and the additional three years that the FPÖ spent in office with the ÖVP did not bring the internal factions together. When in 2005 most of the FPÖ government team left the party to launch the BZÖ, the opportunity for a new start was created for the FPÖ. Back in opposition, the party returned to a vote maximizing strategy (cf. Luther 2007), which started a new phase of radicalization, whose impact can be traced on the party's ideology.

The chapter has described the FPÖ's ideological development during the different phases of its lifecycle. As in the chapters on the Danish People's Party and the Northern League, this has been done by considering how the Freedom Party has placed itself in relation to main ideological issues referring respectively to the economic and value dimensions of politics. More concretely the aspects considered have dealt with the party's position on neo-liberal and tax issues, anti-establishment politics, anti-immigration, EU and foreign policy and with positions that refer to the tensions between authoritarian and libertarian values, conformist and anti-conformist views. As mentioned, the attempt was to track some of the main transformations in relation to the party's ideological development and political achievements, paying attention to the way the political opportunity structure has influenced the decisions and characteristics of the party.

Like the other two parties, the FPÖ is a highly dynamic party, also in ideological terms. Today, its profile as social and Heimat party is highly emphasised. This is one of the most interesting and recent developments of this party, introducing the two most important cornerstones of the FPÖ's ideology: its commitment to the nation/homeland and to cultural and identity questions as well as its focus on social and welfare issues. In this respect, it is difficult not to see a higher degree of similarity with the pro-welfare direction already consolidated and championed by the Danish People's Party. Considering the predominantly neo-liberal vocation that characterised the FPÖ in the 1990s, this new formulation represents a noteworthy adjustment in the party's positioning on economic matters, in which a welfare chauvinist approach is no longer considered to interfere with demands for a more efficient public administration, less public spending and more space to the private initiative. The party therefore underlines the importance of a welfare state limited to those in society who deserve help, asking at the same time for stricter rules against welfare abuse, particularly among immigrants, who are framed as undeserving recipients of welfare programmes and benefits.

However, the stronger ideological convergence between the FPÖ and the other two parties observed in this study regards the developments on the value and cultural dimension. Immigration, but increasingly Islam, is to be considered the greatest problem for the future stability and security in the Western and Christian part of the world. The reference to Europe's Christian heritage is also for the FPÖ (as we saw for the Northern League) relatively new. Actually it only became part of the party's official discourse at the end of the 1990s, thus changing the FPÖ's traditional anti-clerical profile. Significantly, Christianity has become one

of the cardinal references in the discussion about the (spiritual) values and foundations of the West threatened by the advance of Islam.⁸³

Much less aligned is the position of the Austrian Freedom Party on foreign policy issues. On the process of European integration the party has developed a more radical line, maintaining for example that if Turkey enters in the EU, Austria should react by withdrawing its membership. Furthermore and quite in contrast with the position of the Northern League, but particularly with the Danish People's Party, the FPÖ continues to encourage an anti-American position and also in relation to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, the FPÖ stands out for its attacks to Israel, diverging in this from the pro-Israel position that at present characterises most of the radical right in Western Europe.

The analysis of the development of the FPÖ ideology over time shows therefore that the Austrian party has several common ideological positions with the Danish People's Party and the Northern League, but that substantial differences between the parties continue to be such. The FPÖ's negative experience in government has driven the party back to a more radical line and vote maximising profile. The question is whether the party in the future will look at the experience of the mainstream radical right, or if it will prefer to remain in opposition to exert its political influence.

⁸³ At the European Parliament election of June 2009 one of FPÖ's slogans was: 'The West in Christian hands' (*Abendland in Christenhand*; cf. also Betz and Meret 2009).

PART III

THE VOTERS' PROFILE AND ATTITUDES

8. THE VOTERS' PROFILE: SOCIAL CLEAVAGES

Introduction

This and the following chapter will look respectively at the profile and issue positioning of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party voters. The previous chapters, mapping the ideological development of the three parties (see here Chapters 5, 6 and 7), have suggested an ideological convergence taking place on the cultural and value dimension of politics and in particular on the immigration question, but also on a number of other value-related issues. The task of this chapter is to see whether there is convergence between the profiles of radical right electorates in the three countries as regards voters' social profile and issue positions. Have the radical right parties become loudspeakers of the needs and demands of particular segments of the electorate? Here, the messages and the policies of the radical right parties need to be considered and understood in relation to the characteristics and demands of the electoral support base. Differences may remain, for example the three party agendas still seem to diverge on the economic dimension. The Danish People's Party dropped tax protest and public retrenchment in favour of a pro-welfare positioning. The Freedom Party in Austria has until recently maintained a strong neoliberal profile, defending private initiative and market freedom and asking for less interference from the state. However, this position would seem at odds with the party's support among manual workers, and this may explain why in more recent years the Freedom Party has adopted a social and more pro-welfare profile (see Chapter 7). Compared to the other two parties, the Northern League has maintained a neoliberal and tax protest profile, thus changing little of its economic agenda over the years (cf. Chapter 6). It is interesting to examine whether this corresponds with a different social composition of the party's electorate, with a recruitment more biased towards self-employed and people working in the private sector.

To a considerable extent, the ideological development of a party must be assumed to depend also on the political and institutional environment within which the party operates (e.g. Carter 2005; Kriesi et al. 2008; Arzheimer 2009). This means that competition with other parties, feedback from the electorate and the different positions occupied by the party in the national political space can stimulate a re-orientation of political strategies and politics. In this sense, party politics can both influence and be influenced by the demands and opportunities coming from the national electoral market. In this and the following chapter, the effects of the interaction between the parties and the electorate will thus be addressed and elaborated in a comparative approach that will hopefully produce more knowledge about the radical right vote in relation to the political context and its development.

The radical right electoral profile will be analysed in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9. The present chapter introduces a comparative overview and discussion of the parties' social profile regarding gender, generational composition, occupation and educational levels. Several studies underline the increasing similarities of the radical right social profile, focussing in particular on working class support and on the low educational attainments among supporters of the radical right (cf. Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Arzheimer and Carter 2003; Goul Andersen & Bjørklund 2002). Roughly formulated, male manual workers and voters with lower education seem to have become the electoral backbone of several radical right parties in Western Europe (Swyngedouw 1998; Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 2002; Plasser and Ulram 2000; Hainsworth 2000).

These characteristics have been differently interpreted, often with reference to the profound socioeconomic and cultural transformations that have changed working and living conditions in the last couple of decades. Risk has become a main component, it is argued, of the way individuals experience their present role and future prospects in the different contexts of their everyday life (cf. Bauman 1998; Beck 2009; Kriesi et al. 2008). As described in previous chapters, the marginalisation hypotheses tends to ascribe the voting patterns of the working class to the impact of globalisation on advanced capitalist societies. In particular, globalisation is considered to limit the employment opportunities of the less qualified and low educated social groups, which could arguably make them more worried about the effects of increasing immigration on the labour market and on the welfare state.

We will not discuss the premises of the social impact of globalization, which seem questionable at least in the Scandinavian countries (e.g. Goul Andersen 2007c). Even if the social impact is minor, "objectively" speaking, there may still be a psychological effect. In our empirical analysis we will concentrate on the association between the individual's socioeconomic background and vote for the radical right.

Referring to an even deeper layer of social, cultural and political change, the new political cleavages approach claims that support to the radical right parties should be understood first of all in terms of a shift in traditional class voting and consequent realignment following different and new patterns of political support. Within this framework the radical right is largely explained in terms of authoritarian and materialist attitudes and viewpoints clashing with the libertarian and postmaterialist concerns of the new left. Social class and economic interests gradually became less important elements to explain how people vote, whereas a new dimension gained ground in politics. This was increasingly engaged with values, principles and beliefs which increasingly came to be at odds with each other and which projected a whole new set of politics and cultural issues on which the parties had find a position (cf. Flanagan & Lee 2003). Hence, the attitudes of the electorate of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party will be examined in relation to some of these issues, to see in what respect and eventually how the positions of these voters differ

from the rest of the electorate. This will allow us to track down some of the most relevant similarities and differences among them.

Apart from providing a comprehensive and as reliable as possible data foundation to describe the voters' social profile, the approach is to move away from the interpretation of the radical right as a fleeting phenomenon. If this reading was understandable at a time when these parties were still considered "flash" parties, today several of them are no longer exceptional or marginal actors, but have become mainstream and active participants in the political landscape.

This also means that the political position and the political messages of these parties may change over time; a development that, in turn, could also impact on the parties' electoral composition. As observed in the previous chapters on party ideology (see Chapter 5, 6, and 7), parties may enter a phase of 'normalisation' where ideology tends to de-radicalise, in because the party works to gain broader support among the electorate and therefore pays more attention to the nature and substance of the message that is sent out to the electorate. This approach, which until very recently has been largely neglected by the scholarly literature, encourages more explicit analyses of the mutual relationship between the radical right ideological and institutional development and the electoral support.

8.1 The survey data

The comparative analysis of the electorate is based on quantitative data from national electoral surveys and other international surveys (cf. Chapter 2). The analysis of the DPP voters is based on the Danish Election Surveys (1994-2007), which represent the most detailed and comprehensive material to study the electoral profile of the Danish People's Party in relation to the other parties in Denmark. The Italian National Election Studies (ITANES) covering 1994-2008 are the basis of most analyses of the profile of the Northern League supporters. Radical right supporters are often better represented in national election surveys than in international surveys; for this reason these data were preferred over cross-country surveys. However, since the Austrian national election surveys are unfortunately not available to the international scientific community, the analysis of FPÖ voters is based on a number of recent international surveys (ISSP, EVS and ESS), referring approximately to 1995 to 2002-03.

Exploiting different national and international data sources was therefore one of the most challenging tasks of this comparative analysis, particularly in relation to the need of finding equivalent and comparable variables. The variables selected are therefore those considered most reliable and similar in relation to the scopes and goals of the present analysis. This has also allowed an extension of the time span considered, which is here long enough to observe how the voters' social profile and position on a number of issues have developed and changed over time.

8.2 Male dominated parties

Voting patterns have shown that the electorate of radical right parties, in the broadest sense, is skewed towards men (cf. Givens 2004; 2005; Mayer 1998; Kitschelt 1995; Plasser, Ulram and Sommer 2000). Radical right parties are also held to be swayed by the appeal of charismatic male leaders (cf. Pedahzur and Brichta 2002; Eatwell 2002). Recent studies have actually shown that strong leadership does not have a significant effect on the electoral support and outcomes of the radical right (cf. van der Brug and Mughan 2007), but both the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party have since the late 1980s been led by charismatic male leaders. In contrast, the Danish People's Party has since the start been led by a woman, Pia Kjaersgaard.⁸⁴ Together with the male overrepresentation in the party electoral composition, the charismatic leadership has for long been considered a common feature with the fascist parties of the past (cf. Durham 1998) also characterising the poujadiste and later the tax protest movements of the 1970s.

The high proportion of male voters has followed the electoral development of most of the recent radical right parties over time, cutting across the different national contexts and thus also different social and cultural traditions in relation to gender role and gender equality.⁸⁵ Interpretations of the difference between men's and women's votes for radical right parties vary (cf. Givens 2004; Simmons 2001) and it is useful to sum up some of the main hypotheses that have been used to explain this trend. However, the analysis of gender difference in this section will focus on gender composition to see whether the electorate of the three cases here considered is heavily skewed toward men. If so, it will be interesting to observe if the support from women has changed over time, suggesting a relationship with the different phases of the radical right party life course. Finally, as gender can only indirectly explain the difference between male and female voters (cf. Norris 1996), we will briefly consider what are the intervening variables. Specific gender attitudes have for instance been associated to different conditions that pertain to different aspects and conditions of women's life style, social and political values and working experiences.

A classical interpretation considers gender difference in voting behaviour closely related to women's preference for parties that promote moderate politics and views of the world (cf. Norris 1996). This makes female voters less keen to vote for parties that are considered to have radical positions. In this case, the radical right's low electoral appeal among female voters should be seen in relation to the party's position in the party system; the more extreme, the lower its appeal to women. The scholarly research that suggests that it is because of the par-

⁸⁴ The Scandinavian radical right represents an interesting exception to charismatic male leadership. Pia Kjaersgaard was leader of the Progress Party in the years 1985 and until her leaver in 1995. More recently in Norway, a woman, Siv Jensen, took over the leadership of the Norwegian Progress Party, replacing Carl I. Hagen. Under her leadership, the Norwegian Progress Party gained about 23 pct. of the votes at the parliamentary election in September 2009. The Norwegian Progress Party is the second largest in the country after the social democratic Arbejderparti (Labour Party).

⁸⁵ The lack of thorough analyses of the radical right gender difference has recently been observed also by Cas Mudde (see Mudde 2007: 90).

ties' authoritarian positions, anti-immigration politics and ultratraditionalist views (for instance on abortion, homosexuality and children upbringing) that women do not vote for the radical right as much as men, refers to the same notion (e.g. Kitschelt 1995; Mayer 1998). In this case, the authoritarian positions expressed by the radical right are believed to find limited support among female voters, as women have less authoritarian values and a more moderate view of the world.

With the increasing participation of women in the labour market, other approaches gained weight, emphasising for example the fact that women can be strongly influenced by working in specific sectors of the labour market. The low appeal that radical right parties have among female voters is in this case ascribed to the fact that women, more often than men, are employed in environments with high levels of social interactions, e.g. the nursing and social care sectors, and more generally as public salarieds. Working in these sectors may affect women's empathy, making them more inclined than men to develop tolerant attitudes and liberation values (Kitschelt 1995).

The explanations above start out by considering how value preferences influence party choice among female and male voters, implicitly maintaining that the position of a party remains constant over time. However, as pointed out in the introduction, the position and the political messages of these parties may change over time. Government seeking policies and positions could for example contribute to a less radical image of a party, increasing its electoral appeal among female voters. In this case, the effects of the party strategy and life-cycle should be empirically observed in a reduction of the gender gap, when a radical right party approaches or achieves political influence.

Some of the implications of the hypotheses will be discussed in relation to the three radical right parties considered, to the extent allowed by the data and by the limits established by this section.

First we examine to what extent the image of 'male-dominated' parties applies to the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party. Table 8.1 shows that men are more inclined than women to vote for the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party. The gender gap is significant for the whole period (1998-2005) in the case of the Danish People's Party, but changes in the two other cases.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ However this is also a result of the varying and often small number of cases registered for the Northern League in the 2001 and 2005 survey and for the Freedom Party in the 2002 survey.

Table 8.1 Support for Frp/DF, LN and FPÖ among men and women, 1994-2006. Percentages.

DF	1994¹	1998	2001	2005	2007
Male	8*	9*	15*	15*	14
Female	5	6	9	11	13
LN	1994²	1996	2001	2006	2008
Male	6	10*	3	3	8
Female	5	7	2	3	9
FPÖ	1995	1999	2002	2004	
Male	21*	23	7*	11	
Female	12	18	4	10	
N					
Denmark	906	1002	983	1138	627
	862	832	894	921	694
Italy	808	1101	1191	1314	899
	749	905	1056	1207	828
Austria	333	490	651	285	
	377	550	732	311	

Sources and notes to survey data used:

Denmark: Danish Election Studies, 1994-2007. Political weight (based on official election result). For the 2007 Danish election survey only the main survey is included and not the web panel.

Italy: Italian National Electoral Studies (ITANES), 1994-2006. Demographic weight only for 2001 (peso-dem) as suggested in the ITANES survey guidelines. Population and political weight (ACweight) for survey 2006.

Austria: International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 1995; European Value Survey (EVS) 1999; European Social Survey (ESS) 2002-03. Population weight (design weight); ISSP 2004.

N refers to the elections in Denmark (DF), Italy (LN) and Austria (FPÖ).

* Gender difference significant at 0.05 level.

¹ Danish Progress Party (FrP) in 1994. In 1998 the FrP managed to get just above the electoral threshold. The party's strong (female!) candidate in Northern Jutland, Kirsten Jakobsen, ensured the FrP two of the four parliamentary mandates.

² The question for party choice in the 1994 post electoral study was open-ended (see ITANES 1994). The vote for 1994 is therefore calculated as the sum of votes coded for the Lombard League, for the Venetian League and for Umberto Bossi, respectively.

Considering the gender composition of the parties, the proportion of men was already at the time of the Danish Progress Party voters (1973-1990) between 55 and 67 pct. (Goul Andersen & Bjørklund 2000). This was at the time when tax protest, anti-establishment politics and ultraliberal positions were (still) central issues on the party's political agenda. This at least suggests that the biased gender composition is not primarily related to the emergence of the party's anti-immigration position. Other studies confirm that gender is not so central to explaining different attitudes towards immigration in Danish politics (cf. Stubager 2004). There is also little evidence for the interpretation indicating employment in the public sector and particularly in occupations with a high degree of social interactions as a reason that women are less likely than men to vote for a radical right party. The Danish People's Party is in fact poorly represented among the public salarieds, both women and men.

When the Danish People's Party was launched in 1995, men continued to be overrepresented in comparison with other mainstream parties. Even though the issue of immigration was now elevated to the core issue, there was no change in gender composition. Nor did it

improve the party's appeal among Danish female voters that the party leader was a woman (Pia Kjaersgaard) with an employment record in the (public) elder care sector. As observed in Table 8.2, showing the percentage difference from the average proportion of female voters in the election surveys in the main Danish parties, the proportion of women in the Danish People's Party electorate remained below average from 1998 to 2007.

Table 8.2 Proportion of women among voters of main Danish political parties. Percentage differences from proportion of female among all voters with party choice (1994-2005).

	1994	1998	2001	2005	2007
SF	+12	+11	+17	+9	+13
S	+1	+1	+3	+5	0
RV	(+7) ²	(-1)	+9	-3	(+8)
V	-3	-6	-2	-3	-6
K	-7	-1	-5	-3	-5
DF ¹	(-11)	-8	-13	-7	-1
All	49	45	48	45	52

Source: Danish Election Studies, 1994-2007. Political weight (see note under Table 8.1).

Abbr.: Socialist People's Parti (SF); Social Democrats (S); Social Liberals (RV); Liberal Party (V); Conservative Party (K); Danish People's Party (DF).

¹ The figure for 1994 refers to the Danish Progress Party (FrP).

² Figures are in brackets if N is lower than 100.

The male 'dominated' electoral profile of the Danish People's Party seems to support the hypothesis that women are more reluctant to vote for political parties that are considered extreme (as they have always been, cf. Goul Andersen 1984). On the other hand, Table 8.2 disconfirms the classical assumption about a conservative orientation among the female electorate (cf. Duverger 1955; see also Norris 1996: 335). Currently, women show rather to prefer left-wing parties, and at least since the late 1960s, there has been no conservative inclinations among women (cf. Goul Andersen 1984) as it still did in other European countries. Since the mid-1970s, the vote for the left has been stronger among public employees; this explains much of the gender difference in voting patterns, but the Danish People's Party is poorly represented among public employees, both for men and women.

The observations thus confirm the stronger popularity of the Danish People's Party among the male electorate. However, this gender bias seems to have become less pronounced since 2001 and had almost evaporated in 2007, according to the Danish election survey. Table 8.2 actually suggests that the Liberals and the Conservatives had a more biased gender composition than the Danish People's Party in the 2007 election. However, it is very difficult to conclude with certainty whether the political responsibility wielded by the Danish People's Party from 2001 to 2007 has helped to 'normalise' the party's image and to increase its appeal

among women⁸⁷. In any case, the figures at least seem here to indicate that women do not longer consider the party so much at odds with the rest of the mainstream right wing.

In the case of the Northern League, there is reason to believe that during phases of ‘normalisation’ the party achieves better results among the female electorate, whereas in periods of political radicalisation outside government, for example in 1996, Italian men remain the core supporters, while women prefer to vote elsewhere. This reading seems to be supported by early analyses of the gender gap in the Northern League’s electoral composition. Already in the 1980s, when the different ethnoregionalist leagues had not yet merged under the Lombard League to form today’s Northern League, the support from the male voters was dominant (see Mannheimer 1991). In the following years, also women started to show increasing interest for the party (see Diamanti 1993), perhaps as an effect of its political normalization as it became more engaged in government seeking politics. The party succeeded in 1994, when the centre-right wing coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi took office. But the profound changes of the Italian political system that had helped the party away from the margins brought on the scene a new and strong electoral competitor to the Northern League: Forza Italia, the party founded by Silvio Berlusconi. FI appealed to some of the same electoral segments in the North and became particularly popular among Italian housewives (cf. ITANES 2001: 47-58; cf. also Meret 2007).

The Northern League’s withdrawal from the first Berlusconi coalition provoked a government crisis and disappointed part of the electorate. At the following election in 1996, the centre-left coalition won. It is likely that the period of radicalization and peripheralization that followed the Northern League’s short government experience in the 1990s contributed to alienate female voters from the party. This decision was followed by a radicalisation of the party politics, particularly in relation to the North and South question and the proposed secession of the Padanian ‘nation’ from the rest of the country (see Chapter 6).

In 1996 the League got large electoral support from men (cf. Table 8.1 above). The Northern League radicalized its politics as well as its language and rhetoric. It was in the same years that Bossi provocatively stated that “the League has a hard-on”.⁸⁸ He obviously did not take into account the negative impact that this kind of ‘macho’ slogan could have had on the female voters.

In 2001 the Northern League was again on its way to government, this time with much narrower electoral support. Table 8.3 shows that in the years 2001 and 2008 the percentage differences from the proportion of female voters is less pronounced in the electoral composition of the Northern League, suggesting that government responsibility helped the party to attract more female voters than for example the right wing party Alleanza Nazionale.

⁸⁷ A larger Gallup omnibus survey (N=61,000) carried out in November 14, 2007- October 1, 2008 shows however that the Danish People’s Party continues to be more strongly represented among men (57%) than women (48%).

⁸⁸ ‘La Lega Nord ce l’ha duro’; these words were shouted loud by the LN leader Umberto Bossi at the party congress in 1997. See at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uV6U0p0ie8s>.

Table 8.3 Proportion of women among voters of main Italian political parties. Percentage differences from proportion of female among all voters with party choice (1996-2008).

	1996	2001	2006	2008 ²
Prc	+2	-7	-5	(-14)
Ulivo	+2	+2	+1	+2
FI	+12	+10	+6	+5
AN	0	-10	-9	.
LN	-5	(-3) ¹	(+1)	+1
All	45	47	48	48

Source: ITANES 1996-2006. Only votes to Chamber of Deputies (proportional vote).

Weight as indicated under Table 8.1. Data unweighted for ITANES 2008.

Abbr.: Communist Refundation Party (Prc); Ulivo (OliveTree Coalition: Leftwing Democrats (DS), Margherita, Italian Communists (CI) and Greens (Verdi)); Forza Italia (FI); National Alliance (AN); Northern League (LN).

¹ N lower than 100 are indicated in parentheses. For the LN the number of survey respondents was: 158 (1996); 55 (2001); 86 (2006); 152 (2008).

² The percentages for 2008 answer to the new scenario of political coalitions: Prc is therefore replaced by the Leftwing Rainbow (Sinistra Arcobaleno) including Prc, CI and Verdi; the Ulivo coalition by the Democratic Party (PD) and AN is considered with FI under the People's Freedom Party (Popolo della Libertà, PdL). The LN runs the elections 'alone', making a separate agreement with the PdL. Same party coding for 2008 in all the following tables with main Italian parties.

At the election in 2008, the Northern League seemed to regain some support from Italian women, whereas the support to Forza Italia was negatively affected by its merger with Alleanza Nazionale to form the new right-wing The People's Freedom Party (*Il Popolo della Libertà, PdL*) (cf. Table 8.3).

By 2006, the Northern League had been in government for about five years, showing to be a loyal and reliable political coalition partner. In the brief period when the centre left was in government (2006-2008), the Northern League consolidated its profile as a government oriented party that could 'make a difference'. The party continued to support the coalition led by Berlusconi, but refused to join the formation of the PdL, the right-wing answer to the creation of the Democratic Party (Partito Democratico, PD) on the left wing of Italian politics.

At the elections held in April 2008, the party achieved more than 8 pct. of the votes at the national level, doubling the electoral result and the number of parliamentary mandates (from 26 to 60) in the Deputy Chamber (cf. Table 1.3 Chapter 1). Also in terms of gender composition, there was little difference between the male and the female vote for the party (see Table 8.1; cf. also ITANES 2008: 84). These results again seem to support the thesis that in phases of normalization and government seeking responsibility the radical right has a better appeal among female voters than in periods of marginalization and radicalization.

Another aspect of the party ideology also deserves to be mentioned in relation to the vote; the Northern League has in recent years emphasised 'modern traditionalist' positions on family politics and on questions involving the role of women in society. Against the "mondialist" and homogenizing view of the world (see Chapter 6), promoting what the party considered a dominant individualism and the fragmentation of the social, the Northern League

invokes the 'integral' and integrated unit represented by the family (husband, wife, father, mother and children) and its social and civic function in terms of stability, fertility and positive social unit of reference. In practical terms, the party has translated this position into demands for an improved social welfare for families with children, including for example child benefits, tax reductions to families with many children, housing facilities and discounts to basic child products.

The Northern League promotes a profile of protector of the traditional family, a role that in the past was almost the exclusive domain of the Christian Democrats. The party has also taken a more inward position on matters such as abortion, homosexuality and rights to unmarried couples (see here Chapter 6). It is important to point out that the increasing interest and emphasis on family politics and rights matured together with amplified attention towards the Christian values and principles and the need to defend these values against the dangers from Islam and from the generalized deterioration of contemporary Western societies due to individualist lifestyles and multicultural utopias. The significance that Christianity is given today in the Northern League's political agenda and rhetoric has driven the party toward more intransigent positions, for example in relation to abortion, artificial insemination and scientific use of embryonic stem cells. It is plausible that this change in political profile would enhance the appeal of the Northern League among the most religious female voters with lower levels of education and perhaps also with a conventional view of the world. This might also suggest that the party will continue to be rather poorly represented among the younger generations of female voters with higher levels of education.

Gender-specific voting behaviour has characterised Austrian politics since the 1980s. Austrian electoral studies have demonstrated that the gender gap widened in the course of the 1980s, and in the late 1990s it was possible to speak about a gender-specific party system in Austria (Plasser Ulram 2000: 27). In the 1970s, women began to move away from a traditionally anchored voting behaviour, influenced by church affiliation and denominational milieus, and also as a consequence of increased labour market participation and higher levels of education. In the following decades women's votes became more and more influenced by libertarian and egalitarian values and principles. This adjustment went through a phase of gender voting alignment, during which the difference between men's and women's voting behaviour diminished significantly. The result was an increased electoral appeal of left-wing parties among female voters, in particular among the higher educated. Later the female electorate showed a preference for new political parties supporting environmental issues and libertarian politics, e.g. the Greens (see Plasser and Ulram 2000: 29).

While the left-wing parties appealed successfully to the female electorate, the Austrian Freedom Party became popular particularly among men. As Austrian electoral studies highlight, the FPÖ was already in 1994 and until 1999 the second largest party among the male electorate (Plasser and Ulram 2000). Table 8.4 shows a clear underrepresentation of women in the party's electoral composition for the period 1995-2003.

Table 8.4 Proportion of women among FPÖ voters and main Austrian political parties. Percentage differences from the average proportion of female party voters in survey (1994-2006).

	1995	1999	2003	2004
Grüne	-6	+8	+7	+7
SPÖ	0	+1	-3	-3
ÖVP	+10	+1	+1	+2
LiF	(+2)	(-2)	.	.
FPÖ	-14	-6	-15	-4
All	53	53	53	52

Sources: ISSP 1995; EVS 1999; ESS 2002-03; ISSP 2004. Weight (see note to Table 8.1).

In 2002 electoral support to the Freedom Party dropped to only 10 pct. of the votes. The sudden decline of electoral support again widened the gender gap. According to the ISSP data, in 2004 the difference between men and women seems to have weighted less than in the past. However, at the recent Austrian elections, the vote for the FPÖ was again higher among male voters than among women (see Plasser and Ulram 2008).

Predictably, the analysis of the gender composition above confirms that men have been overrepresented among the voters for all three parties in the period considered. As regards the explanations that have been put forward for this generalised gender difference in the radical right it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions. However, the observations do suggest that – partly in line with the classic thesis about women’s reluctance to support “extremist” parties – the gender bias may decline over the party’s life course and in particular when the radical right party ‘becomes mainstream’.

8.3 Generations, age and vote for the Danish People’s Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party

Several classical studies dealing with political behaviour and party choice have underlined the different political attitudes, preferences and priorities that characterise different generations and their vote across time. However, in relation to the radical right, there are contradictory interpretations of the effect of age and the generational profile that characterises these parties.

According to Ronald Inglehart (cf. Inglehart 1971; 1977), postmaterialist issues and new values have replaced the importance that materialist issues and priorities had played for the generation born before the WWII. Consequently, postwar generations have developed more libertarian and anti-authoritarian attitudes in comparison to older cohorts. The unfolding of these changes implied that traditional, authoritarian and nationalistic positions mainly appeal to the older electoral cohorts, rather than to the new and increasingly postmaterialist generations. In this case, as Norris (2005) almost provocatively suggests, the radical right parties would be deemed to fade in popularity, due to the process of population replacement and the consequent shrinkage of the radical right electoral base.

Quite in contrast with the above mentioned view, another scholarly reading suggests that it is often among the youngest generations of voters that the radical right finds the strongest support, as these voters are more likely to be unemployed and do not have the same partisan

connections as their parents (cf. Givens 2005: 60). If this is the case, education may play a role by influencing the position of the younger voters and their views of the world (cf. Westin 2003: 119).

If we look at the generational profile of the three parties, we observe a slightly skewed distribution towards the older cohorts that characterizes in particular some stages of the party development. However, when considered in a comparative perspective and at different periods, the generational composition of the radical right actually shows more varying patterns. This is shown in Table 8.5 below.

Table 8.5 Support for Frp/DF, LN and FPÖ among main cohorts. Percentages.

DF	1994¹	1998	2001	2005	2007
Born before 1930	11	7	11	10	19
1930-44	8	9	13	18	21
1945-59	5	7	10	12	14
1960-74	4	7	13	12	9
1975 and after	0	5	12	13	11
LN	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008
Born before 1930	5	12	2	2	4
1930-44	5	7	2	2	7
1945-59	6	8	3	5	9
1960-74	6	11	2	4	12
1975 and after	12	9	3	3	8
FPÖ	1995	1999	2002		
Born before 1930	15	17	5		
1930-44	14	22	8		
1945-59	14	17	4		
1960-74	20	21	4		
1975 and after	18	24	6		
N					
Denmark	363	213	185	180	61
	363	469	403	473	275
	514	526	548	597	406
	492	491	535	555	377
	35	133	206	253	232
Italy	255	99	170	62	68
	300	266	509	462	369
	456	673	608	688	474
	483	732	694	785	406
	63	236	276	563	408
Austria	117	93	108		
	181	274	276		
	199	291	390		
	175	276	419		
	38	106	178		

Sources: Danish Election Studies 1994-2005; ITANES 1994-2006; ISSP 1995; EVS 1999; ESS 2002-03. Weight as indicated in Table 8.1. Note that the N can vary and are often small. The N indicated are referred to the unweighted data.

¹ Progress Party for 1994.

In the 1990s, the Danish Progress Party gained significant support from older voters, but this was also a result of the party electoral decline, which came along with the younger voters' exit from the party (cf. Table 8.2 above for 1994). At the 2001, 2005 and 2007 elections the Danish People's Party continued to be overrepresented among the older generations. This generation includes the 'over 60s', that is people who at the time of the survey interviews were already pensioners, or very close to retiring from the labour market. Considered over a longer time-span, the generational composition of the Danish People's Party therefore looks rather polarized (cf. also Andersen 2000: 8-9). With the achievement of political influence in 2001, support for the party had increased among the other generational groups (see Table 8.5), but the party remained underrepresented among the so-called 1968 or welfare generation (born 1945-59) and to some extent also among the children of that generation. However, the Danish Party undoubtedly has some positive appeal to the older generations of voters.

At the 2008 election, the Northern League confirmed its profile as a party with a broader 'generational' appeal. In any case, and contrary to those who would expect the party to be more popular among the older voters, the Northern League is actually receiving more support from the younger cohorts than from the old. This was similar to the Freedom Party, which in the 1990s was significantly supported by the younger generations of Austrian voters (see Table 8.5 above). This support followed the steady decline of the electoral appeal of the traditional parties among voters of the younger generation that was registered in those years (Plasser & Ulram 2000: 32). While the SPÖ and ÖVP had managed to attract 97 pct. of first-time voters in 1979, this figure dropped to only 42 pct. in 1999 (cf. Plasser and Ulram 2000). By contrast, the FPÖ had in the same period increased its share among first-time voters from 3 to 38 percent. The younger generations did not identify with a political party in the same way as the older generations of voters did, which perhaps made it easier for them to vote for the FPÖ. However, already in the first period in office in 2000, the FPÖ lost much of the support from those who had voted for the party to protest against the status quo (see Müller 2004) and also from the younger cohorts. At the 2002 election, the FPÖ was overrepresented among the generation of the 'over 60'; about 17 pct. of these voters gave their support to the FPÖ (cf. SORA 2002) at the elections that downsized the party from 27 to only 10 pct. of the votes.

In brief, the electoral composition of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party did not reveal a particularly high and significant overrepresentation among the older generations of voters. It would therefore be inexact to consider these parties voted only by the old people. This said, it is unquestionable that the Danish People's Party has consolidated the support from older voters. The support seemed first encouraged by the Danish People's Party positions on the value dimension and less directly by the pro-welfare politics favouring improved conditions and services for older people in the Danish society.

The generational profile characterising the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party is more scattered. The electoral support came from different cohorts and has varied over

time, most likely in close relation to the different phases of development of these parties. Both parties have in the past been overrepresented among voters of the younger cohorts, who supported the two parties when they were still at the opposition.

To conclude, the specific age profile of the parties varies from country to country (see also Norris 2005: 144-148) and in relation to the specific historical, social and ideological development of the parties, which therefore appeal to different groups of voters.

8.4 Are radical right parties today's working class parties?

Traditionally the radical right parties' electoral breakthrough and success was considered a middle-class reaction rather than a working class phenomenon (e.g. Fryklund and Peterson 1981). Particularly in relation to the radical and populist right-wing wave of the 1970s and 1980s the hypothesis of a middle-class reaction was widely referred in the political literature dealing with the issue (Lipset 1960). The so called *petite bourgeoisie*, consisting of small entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, self-employed craftsmen and artisans, was afraid of the social and economic deprivation following the rapid social and economic transformations that were felt as particularly threatening in periods of economic recession. Early seminal accounts (e.g. Lipset 1960) had already anticipated the tension created by the impact of the economic and social transformations on the middle class giving rise to social and political reactions that in the interwar period caused support to fascism.

The middle-class reaction applied also to the electoral breakthrough and success of the Scandinavian protest parties in the 1970s and determining the initial fortunes of the Progress Parties in Denmark and –to some extent– in Norway (e.g. Fryklund and Peterson 1981). In the 1980s, studies of the Northern League's breakthrough in Italy emphasised the overrepresentation of small entrepreneurs and self-employed in the electoral composition of the party. Interestingly, it was in the affluent regions of the North and among these segments of the electorate that the League found its electoral bedrock (Mannheimer 1991; Diamanti 1996).

If there was an historical continuity with the past also in the social basis of contemporary politics, it would thus still be possible to observe an overrepresentation of the so called *petite bourgeoisie* among contemporary radical right voters. In this case, following the theory of social deprivation, the vote would emerge out of the fear of having something to lose in the present situation, for example in relation to the personal economy, or social status⁸⁹.

However, recent studies on the radical right have instead underlined the wider class appeal of these parties today, considering the phenomenon in terms of a more diffuse manifestation of protest, discontent and desire to put an end to the political 'status-quo' (cf. Mayer and Perrineau 1992, Ivaldi 1999). Kitschelt (1995) considered the message of the radical right deliberately targeted to different segments of the electorate (see also Betz 1994:174). In this perspective, while populist anti-statist politics can appeal to low-skilled white-collar workers

⁸⁹ This argument is similar to the readings put forward to explain the electoral support to the French *poujadist* movement of the late 1950s (see Hoffmann 1957).

in the private sector, the working class is more likely to respond to the authoritarian positions expressed by the radical right parties in particular on questions such as immigration and law and order (Kitschelt 1995: 9-14).

Other authors (cf. Givens 2005: 60; Bjørklund and Goul Andersen 2002: 119; Norris 2005: 139; Mayer 2005:5) point to the fact that the Western European radical right parties have – particularly in some countries – become new clear-cut working class parties, in the sense that the most relevant support to these parties nowadays comes from unskilled and skilled manual workers who in the past voted for a left-wing party. These patterns of political dealignment and following realignment of the working class then have to be seen in relation to the rapid processes of socioeconomic and political changes that have affected the way and rhythms of work and life in most of the advanced capitalist societies, influencing traditional class-voting behaviour.

More narrowly, the transformation from an industrial to a postindustrial economy are believed to have had a different impact on the individuals, depending on their position within the social space. In this respect, the globalization and marginalization hypothesis (see here Chapter 2) underlines in particular the conflict emerging between those who mostly benefitted from modernization and globalization (the modernisation winners) and those who lost out in terms of status (economic and social) and who live in the uncertainty of what the near future will bring (the modernisation losers) (cf. Kriesi 2008). This would make people blame immigrants for economic problems and unemployment in the country. Anti-immigration grievances would then mainly respond to feelings of economic and social uncertainty that the radical right has been able to translate into politics supporting restrictions against immigration and increased regulation of the distribution of the benefits in the country. The support to the radical right is thus considered a way to reward policies that help shelter the country against the negative consequences of globalization and post-industrialization, for example by regulating labour market competition and promoting politics supporting general restrictions of welfare rights and attacking welfare abuses.

Another reading brought up in the existing literature on the radical right explains the support from the working class by putting emphasis on aspects of cultural adersion rather than on the direct economic costs of immigration and on competition for welfare (cf. Rydgren 2003). The social and economic uncertainties associated with the transformations into global markets and postindustrial societies spread a generalized fear of what is perceived as different and difficult to integrate in society. The increasing social and cultural heterogeneity undermined the basis of social solidarity and welfare that was established on shared national identity, common cultural values and ethnic homogeneity (cf. Alesina and Glaeser 2004: 180-81). Other researchers challenge the assumption that growing ethnic diversity in Western Europe contributes to widespread negative feelings towards interethnic redistribution and social spending (e.g. Banting and Kymlicka 2006; Goul Andersen 2006).

The erosion of class voting behaviour and the emergence and mobilization of new political cleavages present another perspective to explain the radical right vote. Until about the 1970s, social and occupational conditions were good predictors of the voting behaviour in most of the Western industrialized democracies; the occupational status and in particular the division between manual and non-manual working activities had an effect on voting behaviour and led to comparably stable patterns of party voting (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). This started to change from the 1970s and in the 1980s (e.g. Inglehart and Rabier 1986; Inglehart and Flanagan 1987) in line with the rapid socioeconomic and generational transformations at the social and individual level, which contributed to the weakening of traditional class voting. Immigration grievances seem in this situation to have led to widespread mobilisation of new anti-immigration right-wing movements with particular appeal among the manual workers. The fact that anti-immigration policies have stronger appeal among manual workers finds slightly different explanations; for instance the classical theory based on working class authoritarianism (Lipset 1960). These issues gained increasing relevance in the decision of which party to vote for. However, this behaviour started to be considered a consequence of lower educational standards, predisposing people to view things in “black and white, good and evil” (Lipset 1960) rather than in terms of child rearing and patterns of family life, as earlier suggested by part of the scholarly research (cf. Adorno et al. 1950). In more recent studies, this reading has been taken a step forward, making the role of education more explicit and asserting that it is not class as such, but the cognitive and socialising effects acquired through education that influence and shapes the individual’s positions and attitudes. The effects of education on party voting will be more closely considered below.

In the following, part of the interpretations mentioned above will be taken into account. To start with, Table 8.6 shows the support to the three parties based on the main occupational sectors, which allows us to look at changes over time.

Already in the late 1970s the Danish Progress Party started to get increasing support among manual workers, which accelerated during the 1980s (not shown in Table 8.6; e.g. Goul Andersen 2006). From the beginning, the party received a level of working class support and a social composition that was highly unusual for non-socialist parties in Denmark. As Table 8.8 reveals, from 1998 the support from manual workers was taken over by the Danish People’s Party, which reached 9 pct. of the support among manual workers already in 1998. The party support among manual workers has increased with time and in 2007 was about 19 pct. More than 20 pct. of the younger generation of manual workers voted for the DF in 2007, but the party enjoyed a high level of support among all generations of manual workers (table not shown).

Table 8.6 Support for FrP/DF, LN and FPÖ among the different occupational sectors. Percentages.

DF	1994¹	1998	2001	2005	2007
Manual workers	8	9	18	20	19
Private salariat	4	5	9	9	9
Public salariat	1	5	6	6	4
Self-employed	10	13	10	7	9
Outside labour market	8	7	13	16	18
LN	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008
Manual workers	6	11	4	4	11
Private salariat	9	12	4	3	(²)
Public salariat	3	7	2	3	(²)
Self-employed	8	8	3	5	12
Outside labour market	6	8	2	3	7
FPÖ	1995	1999	2002		
Manual workers	24	28	12		
Private salariat	13	(³)	(³)		
Public salariat	11	(³)	(³)		
Self-employed	22	14	7		
Outside labour market	15	21	5		
N					
Denmark	373	411	393	445	277
	294	319	354	398	285
	327	318	356	334	224
	128	115	124	145	84
	648	645	652	736	431
Italy	156	491	310	350	186
	204	48	210	257	.
	210	64	241	315	.
	167	503	314	351	175
	814	268	1127	1227	933
Austria	85	169	125		
	133	.	.		
	72	.	.		
	62	66	66		
	350	487	563		

Sources: Danish Election Studies 1994-2005; ITANES 1994-2006; ISSP 1995; EVS 1999; ESS 2002-03. Weight as indicated in note under Table 8.1.

¹ Progress Party for 1994.

² ITANES 2008 did not include the variable distinguishing between public and private sectors. The other sectors considered were therefore: white collars with lower (14 pct.) and higher functions (7 pct.), directors (15 pct.) and teachers (2 pct.).

³ In the EVS of 1999 and ESS 2002 there was no variable that allowed to distinguish between occupation in the public and in the private sector. The other occupational categories considered were in this case: white collars with higher functions and with lower functions, whose percentages were respectively 13 pct. and 18 pct. in 1999 and 1 pct. and 8 pct. in 2002. See also footnote 96.

Among the other occupational groups (see Table 8.6 above), the Danish People's Party does not have the same level of support, but the party has consolidated its position among voters employed in the private sector and self-employed, whereas the party achieves low support from the public salariats. Among those outside the labour market, the percentage of support is

increased by the inclusion of the pensioners. This matches also what we have seen in previous paragraphs in relation to support from the older cohorts.

At present, the Danish People's Party is undoubtedly the most clear-cut working class party in Danish politics. This position was achieved at the expense of the traditional working class party, the Social Democrats, which through the years have lost considerable support among manual workers. This is better shown in Table 8.7, which displays more clearly how the share of manual workers has continued to move away from S and the socialist parties towards first Progress Party first and after the mid-1990s the Danish People's Party.

Table 8.7 Share of manual workers within main Danish parties/ party groups (1994-2007). Difference from the average/all in percentage points.

	1994¹	1998	2001	2005	2007
DF	+18	+9	+20	+25	+24
Non-socialist parties	-10	-10	-7	-10	-7
S	+13	+11	+9	+12	+7
Other left-wing parties	-3	-2	-11	-2	-10
All	33	36	32	33	33
<hr/>					
N					
DF	112	136	225	273	188
Non-socialist parties	842	802	898	1055	586
S	612	658	547	532	350
Other left-wing parties	185	187	165	193	208

Source: Danish election surveys (1994-2007). Political weight (see note under Table 8.1).

¹ Progress Party in 1994.

Legend: DF= Danish People's Party; Non-socialist parties= Liberals (V), Conservatives (K), Social Liberals (RV), Centrum Democrats (CD), Christian Democrats (KrD); S= Social democrats; Other left-wing= Socialist People's Party (SF); Unity List (Enh.).

In other words, Table 8.7 highlights how the Danish People's Party has actually benefitted from the working class political dealignment. At the party's first parliamentary election, the share of manual workers voting for the Danish People's Party was 9 percentage points above the average and in 2007 it had expanded to +24 percentage points. In the same period, the share of manual workers voting for the Social Democrats remained about 10 percentage points above population average (see Table 8.7), but far from the high percentages registered by the Danish People's Party.

The class voting de-alignment among manual workers started already with the Progress Party in the 1980s (see Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 2000: 216-217). The proportion of workers among the Progress Party supporters increased in nearly every election starting from the late 1970s and representing in this sense an original development in relation to the 'traditional' support from the middle class expected from a tax protest party. During the 1980s, working class support to the Progress Party became increasingly significant.

As explained in Chapter 5, the increased support from the working class went together with some relevant changes in the Progress Party's political agenda. In those years the party dampened on the tax protest issue and on ultraliberal positions and started to emphasise other

types of issues, such as the anti-immigration question. Until the electoral decline in the 1990s, the support from manual workers indicated also that the Progress Party was entering a new phase, which put an end to the tax protest years. The working class profile was overtaken by the Danish People's Party in the late 1990s. At present the DF is the most clear-cut working class party in Danish politics and thus an electoral competitor of the Social Democrats for the vote of the manual workers.

The pro-welfare position implemented by the Danish People's Party across the years has probably helped the party to maintain and enhance the support among the manual workers. As seen in Chapter 5, the DF has also clearly and often spoken about the party as the heir and protector of the 'real' social democratic values. The party's restrictive and critical approach to immigration has certainly played an important role in this, creating the right combination that has been able to consolidate support from the working class. It could therefore be argued that while the DF's anti-immigration policy attracts the votes of the immigration sceptics, the party's social policy helps keep them.

Particularly manual workers and pensioners perceive immigration as a threat. In 2007, more than 51 pct. of the manual workers agreed with the statement that immigration constitutes a threat against the national culture and identity; a position similar to the pensioners (here disability pensioners and old age pensioners), whereas only 18 pct. of the public salarieds and students expressed agreement. Things look a little different on the subject of private economy where pensioners and self-employed fear most for their economy in the future.⁹⁰ This would suggest that manual workers do not feel the pressure of economic marginalisation in the near future so much and this does not seem to be the main explanation for the strong support that the Danish People's Party gets from this group.

The Danish People's Party appeals to pro-welfare positions on the traditional economic dimension and to the anti-immigration attitudes in relation to the so called value dimension of politics. The relevance that value and cultural issues have achieved in politics makes us question if social class only indirectly explain the vote for the radical right, whose main effects should be searched in the different levels of education and in the implications this has on how people vote. It is something that is going to be discussed in the following paragraph.

Compared to the Danish People's Party, the Northern League still has a rather strong appeal among the self-employed (cf. Table 8.6). It is difficult to draw a clear picture of the party composition for the period 2001-2006, due to the small results achieved by the Northern League in those elections; however, it can be observed that through the years the party has maintained its support among the self-employed and at the parliamentary elections in 2008, the Northern League obtained 12 pct. of the votes from this occupational group. A similar trend can be observed among the private salarieds that particularly in the 1990s supported the

⁹⁰ Asked: "If we look 3-5 years ahead would you say that you feel very/quite sure about your economic situation or very/quite unsure?" 33 pct. of the pensioners declared they feel unsure, followed by self-employed (29 pct.) and by students (27 pct.).

party, so that 9 pct. voted for the League in 1994 and 12 pct. in 1996. The opposite seems to apply for the public salariat where support has remained low through the years. The Northern League's popularity among the self-employed and the private salariats in general suggests an electorate that matches the tax protest profile and with several similarities to the Danish Progress Party of the 1970s. The party is considered a guarantor of the private sector in general, since it has supported protectionist measures that helped safeguard the activity of the small entrepreneurs and the self-employed from what the party considered the burden of the tax system in the North and from the consequences of globalization.

But over the years the Northern League has also gained increasing popularity among the manual workers. Already in 1996 the LN was rather strongly represented among the working class (see Table 8.6; cf. also Beirich and Woods 2000) and about one third of the manual workers in the North of the country voted for the party (cf. Biorcio 1997: 254). Recently, at the last parliamentary election in 2008, 11 pct. of the manual workers voted for the League (11 pct. among all population) with much higher percentages in the Northern constituencies (15 pct. in the North West and 33 pct. in the North East of the country). Some scholars have interpreted this as a reaction to the labour market competition following the increasing globalization and internationalization processes and recently fuelled by the international economic crisis (cf. Biorcio 2008).

Compared to the Danish People's Party, the Northern League does not have the same clear-cut working class profile. Undoubtedly, the party has tried to appeal to different electoral groups by addressing different questions over the years, starting with the geographical/territorial cleavage, i.e. the North and South divide. The Northern League has also promoted an anticentralist and anti-elitist position, supporting forms of decentralisation of the economic and political power, tax relief and a lean public administration that could appeal to the private salariats and the self-employed. From the late 1990s these issues have also been used in relation to the European Union. Furthermore, the Northern League appeals to the immigration sceptics and in recent years the party has strongly fueled anti-immigration issues, particularly in relation to problems of law and order, but also and increasingly the social and cultural difficulties that the party sees as emerging from the encounter with Islam.

The support for the Austrian Freedom Party seemed instead to follow the same development observed in the case of the Danish People's Party. As in Denmark, Austrian politics experienced already in the late 1970s the dealignment of the working class from traditional class voting. Until then, about 65 pct. of the Austrian blue-collar workers were voting for the SPÖ. In 1999, the support for the SPÖ among manual workers had slimmed down to only 35 pct., with the FPÖ as the party that mostly gained from this loss (cf. Plasser and Ulram 2000). But already in 1995, about 24 pct. of the manual workers had cast their vote for the FPÖ. It was in particular among young workers that the FPÖ received the strongest support: 57 pct. of male working class voters below the age of 30 voted for the FPÖ in 1999 and 46 pct. of the younger female workers (Plasser and Ulram 2000). With reference to these groups, 24 pct. of

the young male workers ‘under 30’ voted for the Danish People’s Party in 2001, but the party received stronger support among the 30-44 age group (48 pct of the DF working class votes came from this age group), while the party is better represented among the female workers aged 45-59 than the DF (44 pct).

The role as a working class party changed for the FPÖ in 2002 also as a result of the dramatic drop in electoral support. In 2002 the FPÖ achieved ‘only’ 16 pct. of the votes among the workers (Plasser and Ulram 2002) and the SPÖ was able to recapture some of these votes (Plasser and Ulram 2002). But the decline in the working class electoral support was mainly ascribed to the party’s internal conflicts and to the leadership struggle that characterised the years 2002-2006. At the 2008 parliamentary election the FPÖ took back its working class profile. The Freedom Party received 34 pct. of the skilled and unskilled manual workers’ votes (*un- und angelernt Arbeiter*), whereas only 21 pct. voted for the SPÖ⁹¹ and 16 pct. for the ÖVP.

From the observations about the relationship between party vote and occupational sector it emerged that among the three parties analysed here the Danish People’s Party is the only clear-cut working class party. Until the late 1990s also the FPÖ followed this pattern, being well represented in particular among the younger manual workers. However, the data do not say whether the FPÖ has managed to regain the same support from the manual workers in recent years. With the electoral decline experienced by the Austrian party in the years 2002-2006, the FPÖ lost an important share of support from this occupational group. Recent literature suggests however that at the 2008 elections the FPÖ has gained back votes from this occupational group. Compared to the other two parties, the class profile of the Northern League voters is more heterogeneous. The party has remained strong among the self-employed and private sector employees. At the April 2008 election, the Northern League witnessed an increase of support among the manual workers, showing that the party is today well established and represented among all the occupational sectors, when we look at the electoral constituencies in the North.

In relation to the hypotheses introduced at the beginning, we can here observe that while the Danish People’s Party and eventually the Austrian Freedom Party could provide some evidence for the marginalisation theory, given in terms of support from the manual workers, it is more difficult to explain the vote to the Northern League as mainly a working class reaction to the consequences of globalisation. However, we still need to consider the impact on the vote to the three radical right parties of other aspects, e.g. education, and the voters’ attitudes towards major issues like welfare spending and immigration.

⁹¹ Among the specialized workers (*Facharbeiter und Vorarbeiter*) the share of votes was 32 pct. for the SPÖ and 34 pct. for the FPÖ.

8.5 Education and vote for the radical right

As mentioned, social class can be an indirect explanation for the vote for the radical right. What makes the difference is education, which provides different explanations in terms of cognitive capacities (cf. Nunn et. al. 1978; Lipset 1960; Knutsen 2004) or alternatively socialising/relational experiences (cf. Todal Jenssen 1993) that can react with other aspects of the individual's socioeconomic background and affect voting behaviour.

Different theories take into account the impact of education on values, attitudes and on political behaviour in general. However, there is still scholarly disagreement about what characteristics, aspects and contents of education have an influence (most and more directly) on the creation and transmission of specific values (cf. Stubager 2006). At least three different approaches can be distinguished when considering the effects of education on party choice and value positions.

Some studies emphasise the relationship between education and employment (cf. Kitschelt 1995). This approach is close to the marginalization hypothesis and draws attention on the reaction from the social groups that are most exposed to the transformations taking place in contemporary societies. Higher educated have less reasons to fear the social and economic transformations, because they are usually employed in non-manual and conceptual professions, largely in the public sector. Consequently, those with lower levels of education (at least in the first stages of the globalisation process) experience more directly and negatively the challenges posed by the postindustrial and information society, for example in relation to the increasing immigration flows.

Another approach puts more weight on the direct effects of education. More specifically, education is considered to convey a specific knowledge and a cognitive sophistication, making it easier to process and frame complex situations (cf. Lipset 1960). In accordance with this interpretation, people with low educational attainments should then be more likely to understand and therefore support with their vote parties with 'black and white' readings of the world and simple solutions to problems. However, this is somehow a rather hasty and partly reductive explanation of the radical right parties' ideology, which, as we have seen in previous chapters on ideology, is in reality more complex than often described by some scholarly literature. Furthermore, to understand the value differences in terms of more/less complex, more/less primitive, good/bad political behaviour – as done by the cognitive approach to the effects of education on voting – seems to give an oversimplified picture of how individuals develop their attitudes and positions.

According to a third perspective, level of educational attainment an important variable to understand party vote, but first and foremost as a variable explaining different value positions. Together with the rising educational levels in the advanced capitalist societies, the effects of education on the formation of values and political attitudes have become more and more evident. In this case, the socialising effect of education is considered an important factor. The years spent in school have a strong influence not just in terms of qualifications, but

also on the political formation and behaviour of young men and women. Type, length of education and in particular socialising conditions are therefore likely to encourage more tolerant views towards diversity and otherness and promote higher levels of social and political trust; particularly in countries where the transmission of such values has become an integrated part of the educational system.⁹²

The overrepresentation of voters with lower levels of education can thus be considered in relation to the approaches above. For reasons of brevity, however, the present analysis will only get through a few aspects in relation to education and radical right vote and mainly look at how educational attainment is related to party vote.

One of the first problems of the cross-national comparative approach is that the educational systems still differ significantly in the different European countries. This is partly in relation to length (for example mandatory years in school), but also in terms of qualifications and skills achieved within the different educational fields.

For this reason, the comparison of the educational system can be done only with some approximation. However, a general orientation is possible, as particularly for the higher educational attainments the levels in Europe are slowly becoming more similar and because the attainment of an upper secondary school degree can represent a good indication of the difference between the lower and higher educated. Three main levels were distinguished in order to establish equivalents for the education system in the three countries. Low education refers to the years of mandatory school in Denmark and Austria (9 years). In the case of Italy, the mandatory school consists of 5 years in primary school and three at the lower secondary level (*scuola media inferiore*). The second and middle levels include the years necessary to attain a professional/vocational education. Those with a high education, a high school degree or a university degree (upper-secondary and tertiary level), are here considered as the third and higher level. It is among the voters of this group that we expect to find lower support for the radical right parties. Table 8.8 shows how the support to the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Freedom Party is distributed on the three different levels of educational attainment.

⁹² The philosophy and work of N.F.S. Grundtvig was particularly significant for the development of the Danish basic educational system as we know it today.

Table 8.8 Support for FrP/DF, LN and FPÖ among main educational groups. Percentages.

DF	1994¹	1998	2001	2005	2007
Low (up to 9yrs)	10	9	17	19	26
Middle (10-11yrs)	4	9	11	15	14
High (12+ yrs)	2	2	6	5	5
LN	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008
Low (up to 8 yrs.)	6	11	2	4	10
Middle (11yrs)	10	15	3	5	8
High (13+ yrs)	5	5	2	3	8
FPÖ	1995	1999	2002		
Low (9yrs)	19	24	6		
Middle (up to 13yrs)	13	21	6		
High (14+ yrs)	12	12	4		
N					
Denmark	785	683	681	732	367
	600	611	620	632	409
	383	531	576	690	494
Italy	983	1240	1150	1124	892
	88	86	162	182	114
	442	614	939	1216	721
Austria	73	112	416		
	26	74	1217		
	14	25	624		

Sources: DF: Danish Election Studies 1994-2005. LN: ITANES 1994-2006. FPÖ: ISSP 1995, European Value Survey 1999, European Social Survey 2002-2003, ISSP 2003. Weighted data as already indicated under Table 8.1.

¹ Progress Party in 1994.

The support to the Danish People's Party among voters with low levels of educational attainment (9 years of compulsory school or less)⁹³ has significantly increased from 17 pct. in 2001 to 26 pct. in 2007, showing the party's strong appeal in this group of people. This could also suggest that the way the Danish People's Party has dealt with the influential position of support to the government first achieved in 2001 has convinced this group of people. At the same time, only about 5 pct. of the higher educated supported the party and this percentage has remained stable through the years.

In Denmark, the educational cleavage has become increasingly important for the understanding of electoral behaviour and party competition. The strong support to the left-wing parties among the higher educated started already in the late 1960s and was later followed by a similar repositioning among voters with lower educational levels to parties like the Progress Party (e.g. Goul Andersen 1979; 1981). Meanwhile, several studies have clearly documented that the different educational levels are related to different positions on authoritarian and libertarian values, identity formation and consciousness, which explains why individuals tend to

⁹³ Until the mid-1960s, 50 pct. of the population left school after seven years of compulsory school. The school reform of 1972 increased the number of mandatory years to the actual nine.

vote for parties that best reflect and articulate their positions (see Borre 2001; Stubager 2004; Stubager 2007).

The Danish People's Party has also accentuated its profile as an anti-elitist and anti-intellectualist political force. As the Progress Party before it, the Danish People's Party has on more than an occasion and particularly while in opposition criticised intellectuals, academics and artists for their lack of common sense, left-wing attitudes and prejudicial position against the party. But at the same time, the mainstream parties particularly on the left used isolationist strategies and labelled the Danish People's Party as politically unfit to the parliamentary democracy, thus augmenting the divide (see Meret 2009).

Also the FPÖ achieved increasing support from the voters with lower levels of education in the 1990s. The party was thus in competition with the SPÖ, which traditionally enjoyed strong support among voters with a compulsory school education, or with a professional educational degree (*Berufsschule/Fachschulbildung*). The Green party was instead increasingly supported by voters with a higher secondary or university degree. As we will see below, it is between the Greens and the Freedom Party that we find the greatest difference in terms of voters' profile and attitudes.

The party's educational composition became less skewed in 2002, due to the sudden electoral decline of the FPÖ. However, the FPÖ continued to be less represented among the voters with higher levels of education (cf. SORA 2002). This was again clear at the 2006 elections, where only 7 pct. of the voters with a high school degree voted for the party, while 21 pct. voted for the Greens, 37 pct. for the ÖVP and 26 pct. for the SPÖ (cf. Plasser-Ullram 2006).

The voters' educational profile in the case of the Northern League seems less polarised (see Table 8.8 above). The educational level of the Northern League electorate reflects the party's occupational composition, where small entrepreneurs, self-employed and lower level administration are represented. Yet the Northern League has low levels of support among voters with higher school degrees and in particular among those with an academic degree (cf. also ITANES 2008).

8.6 The combined effect of socioeconomic variables on party vote

Education seems to have an important effect on the decision of which party to vote for. It remains to be established how important this variable is compared to the other main socioeconomic indicators: gender, cohort and social class. The logistic regression models shown in Tables 8.9, 8.10 and 8.11 attempt to give a more in-depth analysis of the effects of the different socioeconomic background variables on the vote for each of the three parties. In the case of the radical right parties, where the vote percentages are in general rather low, the effects of the different independent variables on the dependent variable can best be investigated by means of a logistic regression. In our case, all logistic regression models are tested against the dependent and dummy variable 'vote or no vote for the radical right party' (DF, FPÖ and LN

respectively). The socioeconomic variables included in the model are standard: gender, cohort, social class (manual workers, self-employed, public and private salariat) and formal educational attainment (high school and university education); all variables were coded as dummy variables. The results are based on the 2005 election survey for the Danish People's Party,⁹⁴ the ESS 2002-03 for the FPÖ and the 2008 Italian Election Survey for the Northern League. The first model (Model I) of the logistic regression starts to estimate the probabilities of the vote for the three radical right parties in relation to gender, cohort and social class, while the second model (Model II) looks at the effect on vote when controlling for the educational variable.

Table 8.9 Effect of different main socioeconomic background variables on the vote for the Danish People's Party (2005). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model I	Model II
Male	0.25	0.24
Cohort (before 1945)	0.11	-0.20
Manual worker	0.31	0.05
Self-employed	-0.97*	-1.08*
Public salariat	-1.04*	-0.91*
Private salariat	-0.63*	-0.60*
Higher education		-1.08*
Constant	-1.86	-1.44
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.05	0.08

Source: Danish Election Survey 2005.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

The first model in Table 8.9 shows that social class has an important effect on the vote for the Danish People's Party before controlling for level of education. It implies that being male, elderly and manual worker is positively related to voting for the Danish People's Party. At the same time, the strongly significant negative coefficients that are related to the category of self-employed, the public salariats and the private salariats, tell us that the Danish People's Party is poorly represented among these occupational groups in relation to (our reference category) the voters outside the labour market. The positive and not statistically significant coefficient⁹⁵ associated with the category of manual worker confirms that it is to a higher degree manual workers and people outside the labour market that vote for the Danish People's Party and not the small entrepreneurs and the self-employed, as it happened in the tax protest phase that characterised the Progress Party in the 1970s.

The second model of the logistic regression shows that higher education is clearly and strongly negatively related with the vote for the Danish People's Party, meaning that people with higher levels of education exhibit a significantly lower propensity to vote for the party than people with lower educational attainment. The educational variable also strengthens the degree of correlaton between our dependent and the independent variables (from 0,05 to 0,08

⁹⁴ The 2005 Danish election survey is considered more reliable than the 2007 survey.

⁹⁵ This is due to our reference category, represented by the people outside the labour market.

R²), even if it is not so much. However, there is still an effect of social class, since the categories of the public and private salarieds and of the self-employed remain significantly below the other groups in relation to the Danish People's Party vote. This allows us to reject the hypothesis that explains the vote for the Danish People's Party in terms of a reaction from the petite bourgeoisie consisting of small entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, self-employed, but more generally from the middle class.

Besides, the logistic regression models of Table 8.9 show that neither gender nor the variable controlling for the effect of the older cohorts have statistically significant effects on the vote for the Danish People's Party.

To sum up, the findings above suggest that it is mainly among the male manual workers and people outside the labour market with lower levels of educational attainment that the Danish People's Party is more likely to find electoral support. This would indicate that the marginalisation hypothesis touches on some aspects in relation to the radical right vote that need to be investigated more in-depth by looking at the voters' attitudes towards a number of relevant issues.

Similarly, the Austrian Freedom Party attracts manual workers and to some extent low skilled white collars,⁹⁶ while the party is poorly supported among the highly skilled white collars (cf. Table 8.10).

Table 8.10 Effect of different main socioeconomic background variables on the vote for the Austrian Freedom Party (2002-03). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model I	Model II
Male	0.52	0.51
Cohort (before 1945)	0.69	0.71
Manual worker	1.13*	1.18*
Self-employed	0.54	0.56
Low skilled white collars	0.94*	0.95*
High skilled white collars	-1.03	-1.08
Service sector workers	0.49	0.50
Higher education		0.18
Constant	-3.56	-3.61
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.08	0.08

Source: ESS 2002-03.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

Also after controlling for education, being a manual worker continues to have a very strong and significantly positive effect on the Freedom Party vote. Interestingly, there is also a higher propensity to vote for the party among white collars with lower functions. Rather interestingly, the variable on education has a little but positive coefficient, here indicating that

⁹⁶ In the ESS 2002-03, occupation is coded according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). In this case, the low skilled white collars consist of the group classified as clerks by the ISCO. The group of high skilled white collars includes: managers, directors, professionals, technicians (cf. ISCO at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/docs/resol08.pdf>; last viewed 01-10-2009).

there is no substantial difference of effect on the vote for the FPÖ between people with a higher educational attainment and those with a medium/lower education.

Compared to the other two parties, the Northern League in 2008 turns out to have a rather heterogeneous electoral support (see Table 8.11).

Table 8.11 Effect of different main socioeconomic background variables on the vote for the Northern League (2008). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model I	Model II
Male	-0.15	-0.11
Cohort (before 1945)	-0.14	-0.21
Manual worker	0.38	0.32
Self-employed	0.52	0.58*
High skilled white collars	-0.05	0.10
Low skilled white collars	0.69*	0.75*
Higher education		-0.38
Constant	-2.40	-2.30
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.01	0.02

Source: ITANES 2008.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

Regarding the effect of gender, the negative coefficients (although small) tell us that gender does not play an important role for the Northern League, and in generational terms the party is not primarily voted for by the older cohorts. As regards social class, the findings shown in Model I reveal that among white collars with lower skills, the self-employed and to some extent also the manual workers, there is a higher propensity to vote for the party. On the other hand, the negative coefficient associated with the high skilled white collars suggests that the Northern League has lower support from this group compared to the reference group consisting of people outside the labour market. Besides, the logistic regression models of Table 8.11 show statistically not significant and negative coefficients in relation to the variables of gender and cohort, also when controlling for education. This basically means that it is not particularly men and voters born before 1945 that vote for the Northern League.

As regards education, the effect is actually lower than expected and even if the negative coefficient indicates that the voters with higher levels of education are less likely to support the Northern League than people with a primary and middle school education, the variable is not statistically significant. These results suggest also that other variables than those considered, might have a stronger effect on party vote.

To conclude, the Danish People's Party vote is influenced by education as well as by social class. More precisely, in the case of the Danish Party there is a clear and positive effect on vote that comes from the manual workers and from voters that have medium/lower educational attainments. The vote for the Austrian Freedom Party is influenced by social class, but not by education. In the data for 2002-03, manual occupation represents the decisive factor for the vote for the FPÖ.

The vote for the Northern League party is more influenced by social class than by education. Of the remaining variables discussed, neither cohort differences nor gender differences stand out as statistically significant variables after controlling for education and social class.

However, these results also need to be considered in light of the impact of issue voting on the support for the radical right. This allows us to observe if and what specific attitudes are eventually triggered by the socioeconomic variables and whether these derive from the party specific socioeconomic composition. The relationship between political attitudes and vote for the radical right is the subject of the following chapter.

9. THE VOTERS' PROFILE: POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND RADICAL RIGHT VOTE

Introduction

Most of the literature dealing with the radical right has for a long time mainly focused on specific attitudes and reactions which alone are considered to explain the electoral support to these parties, such as anti-immigration, protest, political distrust and marginalisation (e.g. Betz 1994; Hainsworth 2000; Schain et al. 2002). More recently, however, the scholarly contributions to the radical right studies have started to deal with the position characterising the radical right voters in relation to the voters of the other mainstream parties (cf. Givens 2005; Carter 2005, but also Kriesi et. al. 2008) though often still in terms of political and institutional structural opportunities for the emergence of these parties. As already underlined elsewhere in this study, the approach that until recently has captured these in the frame of an 'out of the ordinary' political phenomenon, triggered by the reaction of segments of the electorate to present or imminent social, economic or political conditions, has contributed to reproduce this reading of radical right 'exceptionalism' also in those cases where the radical right has by now become a well established political actor.

The approach suggested here aims at challenging this reading. In this sense, radical right issue voting is not necessarily determined by the immediate response or reaction (of a more or less irrational character) to a specific situation or social condition, but is rather the result of an issue positioning that makes the vote for these parties something more solidly founded, something that, as it is the case for the voters supporting other parties, results from the ideas, attitudes and positions developed by the individuals and which reflect their meanings and view of the world. Thus, just as much as for the mainstream parties and their electorate, the vote for the radical right results from the fact that the voter considers the party to be the best representative of his/her positions, goals and interests. As explained by Downs' (1957) geographical model, voters will vote for the "nearest party". In brief, the voter's issue(s) positioning results in a preferred policy orientation that gives support for the party that has the same, or at least very similar, goals and policy solutions on the agenda. Moreover, in relation to what we have defined the radical right parties' lifespan development, it is interesting to observe if for the period considered, there have been changes in the attitudes and positions of the radical right supporters toward relevant issues and how these can be interpreted, when considered in relation to the other mainstream parties.

While Chapter 8 has focussed on the importance and effect of the socioeconomic background variables on party vote, this chapter attempts to get a step further in the analysis, considering the influence and effect of the socioeconomic variables when we take issue voting into the picture.

Two main ideological dimensions are considered important in relation to the ideology and electoral appeal of the radical right (cf. here Chapter 3): the economic and the cultural/value dimension (see also Kriesi et al. 2008). As we have already seen, the marginalisa-

tion hypothesis tends for example to highlight the way globalisation spills over on the position of the voters towards income distribution, welfare services' access and government intervention on the economy, whereas the new cleavage approach puts more weight on the role that new issues such as immigration, environment and European politics play nowadays on the voter's decision of what party to choose. The relationship between the voters and the political system and the levels of trust in politics and more generally in the others are also considered important factors that influence the attitudes of the voter and his or her decision of which party to vote for. The different hypotheses dealing with the radical right vote will thus be kept in mind, while observing the attitudes of the radical right electorate in the following pages.

9.1 On welfare issues and neoliberal positions

As we have seen in the three chapters on party ideology (see here Chapters 5, 6, 7), several radical right parties have today unambiguously oriented their politics towards more pro-welfare positions. This gives another perspective on how to place the radical right, when it comes to economic issues. Until recently, radical right parties were considered more likely to support neoliberal views asking for less government intervention in the national economy, cutbacks in public spending and lower taxes to stimulate the private entrepreneurship. In his analysis, Kitschelt (1995) maintained that these positions were actually part of the radical right's 'winning formula', which allowed the radical right parties to broaden the electoral support appealing to different social groups, including for example small entrepreneurs in the private sector and self-employed. This combination of authoritarian politics and liberal economics has later been questioned by other scholars (e.g. Ivarsflaten 2008; Mudde 2007: 119-137; Norris 2005: 182) and in part reassessed by Kitschelt (2007), who however reaffirms the significance of the economic dimension in relation to the radical right electoral support.

In the last decade another development seems to have prevailed, however, particularly in cases where the radical right parties have gained strong electoral support among manual workers. The decision to promote a pro-welfare profile could therefore be an answer to the demands from the working class, which traditionally supports social security regulations and politics promoting a levelling of income differences. It remains to be seen if this is true and if this regards primarily parties that are overrepresented among manual workers, as is the case of the Danish People's Party and the Austrian Freedom Party. Furthermore, considering that the three parties have either been in government or supported (centre-)right-wing coalitions, it is important to find out to what extent the positions of the radical right electorate and the right wing electorate differ.

By making explicit the support for more pro-welfare politics, the Danish People's Party in 1995 formally broke with the neoliberal and tax protest stances that had characterised the Progress Party. Perhaps this also enhanced the electoral success of the Danish People's Party, especially among specific social groups. As a matter of fact, already the Progress Party had

started to advance claims for more public investments in the Danish welfare state (cf. Bjørklund and Goul Andersen 2000: 211).

DF's voters' position on these issues is indicated by four survey questions asking whether the government spends 'too much', 'a suitable amount' or 'too little' in traditional welfare sectors (health care, elder care, pensions and unemployment benefits). A factor analysis of the variables about budget spending revealed that all four load on a single principal 'welfare factor' component.⁹⁷ Table 9.1 shows the average values scores to the four questions for the Danish People's Party's and the other main party voters for 1994-2007.

Table 9.1 Attitudes towards public spending for welfare among Danish People's Party and other main party voters. Mean values for four indexed areas of welfare spending.

	SF	S	RV	V	K	DF ¹	All
1994	10.5	10.4	9.9	9.6	9.5	10.1	10.0
1998	10.5	10.2	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.9	9.8
2001²	10.1	10.1	9.4	9.7	9.4	10.2	9.9
2005³	10.1	10.4	9.4	9.4	9.3	10.0	9.8
2007	10.5	10.6	9.6	9.5	9.2	10.3	10.0

N							
1994	112	540	61	356	238	99	1540
1998	122	588	64	142	383	119	1617
2001	106	476	76	509	140	197	1608
2005	107	472	149	527	192	242	1793
2007	152	311	56	281	129	168	1166

Source: Danish Election Survey 1994-2007.

Legend: SF= Socialist People's Party; S= Social Democrats; RV= Social Liberals; V= Liberals; K= Conservatives; DF= Danish People's Party.

¹ Progress Party in 1994.

² Standard deviations: SF= 1.23; S= 1.16; RV= 1.20; V= 1.31; K=1.34; DF= 1.21.

³ Standard deviations: SF= 1.11; S= 1.14; RV= 1.16; V= 1.32; K= 1.26; DF= 1.26.

Wordings:

- I will now ask about your views on public expenditures for different purposes. I read some public tasks to you, and I ask you for each of these tasks (health care; pensions; unemployment benefits; elder care sector) to say whether you think the public spends too much money, a suitable amount, or too little money on these tasks.

Table 9.1 shows that already in 1994 the Progress Party's electorate was very positive towards welfare spending, particularly compared to the Liberal and Conservative voters. With the Danish People's Party this position became more obvious with the years. The mean values based on the four questions of welfare spending show that particularly in recent years, basically nobody voting for the Danish People's Party wants to cut down on the traditional welfare areas. The similarity between the position on welfare spending of the DPP voters and that of the Social Democrats is also interesting. It would thus be difficult to find evidence for the market-liberal position of the Danish People's Party on the distributive politics dimension.

⁹⁷ In relation to different areas of public spending, the variables tend to group into three main factors: a welfare factor (health, retirement, unemployment benefits), an authoritarian/ public order factor (law enforcement, defence) and a new politics/humanitarian factor (culture and arts, education, environment) (see Borre 2003b).

Particularly in comparison to the two government parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, which the Danish People's Party has supported since 2001, the differences in relation to how much money should be spent for welfare has increased. While the Liberal and Conservative voters have maintained a stable position on welfare spending, the DPP voters have moved towards more pro-welfare spending positions, at least in traditional welfare areas such as healthcare, elder care, pensions and unemployment benefits. Needless to say, these voter favour reduced public spending for refugees and immigrants (or for aid to developing countries) – and much more than the Liberal and Conservative voters (data not shown).

The Danish People's Party also differs with the government parties on other more general economic issues. It is positioned further to the left on levelling of income differences, government intervention in the economy and the condition of social reforms (see Table 9.2).

Table 9.2 Attitudes among the Danish People's Party and other main party voters' towards relevant economic issues. Percentages of voters that agree with the statements.

	SF	S	RV	V	K	DF	All
Keep social reforms as now							
1998	91	83	68	43	41	47	65
2001	87	76	63	44	38	54	59
2005	88	83	77	56	54	65	69
2007	89	90	86	70	71	81	81
Income differences still too high							
1998	78	65	46	29	17	40	49
2001	79	66	50	35	29	47	49
2005	85	76	59	38	28	53	56
2007	82	74	40	33	24	51	53
State control over private firms							
1998	68	52	43	12	17	20	35
2001	64	52	46	20	16	27	36
2005	65	61	56	31	25	36	45
2007	66	60	42	32	18	40	45

Source: Danish Election Survey 1998-2007. (N(s) as in Table 9.1 above).

Wordings:

- I will now read some political judgements, which represent a discussion between two persons, A and B. We would like to ask you whether you agree more with A or with B. Even if you do not agree completely with either, please indicate which of the two positions is closer to your own:

- First we have a question on social expenses:

A: We have gone too far with social reforms in this country. People should more than now be able to manage alone without social assistance and benefits from society.

B: The social reforms realised in our country must be kept at least as they are now. (Agree)

- The next question is on state control over private entrepreneurship:

A: Businessmen and industrial managers should have more freedom to decide over their own business.

B: The state should control and direct private entrepreneurship. The state control should not be lower than it is nowadays in Denmark. (Agree)

- Then we have a question on living standard and income:

A: Differences in income and living standards are still too high in our country. Therefore people with lower incomes should be able to improve their living standards faster than those with higher incomes.

B: Income levelling has gone far enough. The income differences that still exist should be kept as they are.

As shown in Table 9.2, 81 pct. of the DPP voters agreed in 2007 that social reforms must be kept at least as they are, compared to only 70 pct. of the Liberal and Conservative voters. As regards income differences, the majority of the Danish People's Party supporters believe that there are still strong inequalities and that the living standard of those with lower incomes should be improved more rapidly than that of people with the higher incomes. However, the standpoint towards more government control with the private economy found much less approval among the DPP voters, even if an increase over time can be observed in Table 9.2.

In brief, in relation to traditional welfare spending, social reforms and income differences, the DPP voters place themselves at the centre-left of the economic-distributive dimension, showing small variations of positions within the party electorate towards these issues.

In comparison, the Northern League's electorate has a more liberal approach to economy, government intervention and public spending (see Table 9.3). It is interesting to observe that the Northern League voters have a more liberal orientation than the supporters of Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale. In 2006, 53 pct. of the NL voters agreed that the government should intervene less in regulating the national economy. The percentage fell to about 38 pct. at the 2008 election, but the party's voters were still among the most positive on the issue. In 2006, the Northern League voters did not agree that there are still relevant income differences in the Italian society and that something should be done to level them out. The Italian National Election Studies (ITANES) include only very few variables directly addressing welfare spending. It was also difficult to use other sources, since the Northern League is often poorly represented in international social surveys.

Table 9.3 Attitudes among the Northern League and other main party voters' towards relevant economic issues. Percentage agreeing with the statements.

		RC	Ulivo	FI	AN	LN	All
Less government intervention in economy							
	2006	26	27	42	44	53	34
	*2008	25	30	36	.	38	32
Income difference still high	2006	85	84	71	80	59	79
Private firms more freedom to hire and fire	2001	20	24	55	61	53	42
	2006	17	21	58	65	67	38
	2008	18	30	55	.	61	42
Less taxes even if lower public services	2001	34	31	57	54	46	45
	2006	30	23	44	39	45	32
Privatisation of healthcare system	2001	15	16	40	39	45	29
	2006	4	6	34	39	41	19
N							
2001		140	767	802	316	55	2267
2006		213	955	551	308	86	2525
2008		94	680	602	.	152	1727

Source: ITANES 2001-2008. Weight as indicated under Table 8.1.

Legend:

Prc: Communist Refundation Party; Ulivo (OliveTree Coalition): Leftwing Democrats (DS) + Margherita+ Italian Communists (CI) and Greens (Verdi); FI: Forza Italia; AN: National Alliance; LN: Northern League.

* The results for the 2008 election are referred to the new Italian political scenario of party formations. Thus, Prc= the Leftwing Rainbow (Sinistra Arcobaleno) including the Italian Communists (CI) and the Greens (Verdi); Ulivo= Democratic Party (PD); AN joined with FI and formed the People's Freedom Party (Popolo della Libertà, PdL). The LN ran the 2008 election 'alone', making a separate agreement with the PdL. The same party constellation applies to all the following tables reporting results from the 2008 elections.

Table 9.3 contains two relevant questions on welfare: whether the government should lower taxes even if this means a lower quality of public service and whether the healthcare system should be privatised. Both variables confirm the liberal orientation of the Northern League voters on the economic-distributive dimension, suggesting that in this respect the Italian party matches the neoliberal orientation suggested by Kitschelt better as a component of the radical right winning formula.

The data available for the Austrian Freedom Party are somehow scattered and this makes it difficult to observe how the voters' position on economic issues has developed over time and particularly in recent years.⁹⁸ However, Table 9.4 shows that the FPÖ voters hold a neoliberal position on most of the issues taken into account. This is also shared by the ÖVP

⁹⁸ Austria did not join the ISSP on the role of government in 1996 and 2006 where a battery on welfare spending was included, and the 2008 EVS, which could have been interesting to compare to 1999, has not yet been released.

and the Liberal Forum, which sometimes are placed furthest into the liberal field of the economic dimension.

Table 9.4 The position of the Austrian Freedom Party voters' on public spending and economics. Percentages that agree with the statements

		Grüne	SPÖ	LiF	ÖVP	FPÖ	All
More freedom to private firms	1999	67	59	82	73	72	68
Pensions an individual responsibility	1999	28	26	34	32	33	30
Levelling income inequalities	1999	51	54	42	49	52	51
	2002	74	74		61	56	65
Less government intervention in economy	2002	26	35	40	56	47	43
	N						
	1999	101	344	45	326	211	1522
	2002	234	470	17	570	73	1384

Source: EVS 1999; ESS 2002-03.

Statements:

-(EVS 1999) On a scale from 1 to 10 where would you place yourself if 1 means that the state should give firms more freedom and 10 the state should control firms more effectively.

-On a scale from 1-5 where 1 means very important and 5 not important at all, how important is to you that society deals with levelling big income differences.

-Responsibility for pension with the individual (no answer/dk; with the state).

About 47 pct. of the FPÖ voters answered in 2002-03 that the government should intervene less in economy and 62 pct. agreed that the state should give more freedom to private firms. FPÖ voters are less concerned about levelling out income differences.

In the 1999 EVS data, respondents were asked how concerned they were with welfare service areas dealing with the elderly, the unemployment and the sick and disabled. The mean value scores for all three questions,⁹⁹ referring to a scale from 3 to 9, where 3 means very little concern and 9 very great concern, reveal that the FPÖ voters were not among the most concerned (6.7) when it came to these groups, just like the supporters of the ÖVP (6.9). The Greens' (7.0) and the SPÖ's voters (7.1) are most worried about the situation.¹⁰⁰

To sum up, a larger share of working class support and a well established welfare state seem to be factors that encourage the development of pro-welfare politics also among the radical right parties. Looking at the Danish case, for example, up to 81 pct. of all the manual workers agree that more money should be used to support the Danish welfare state. The percentage falls to 60 pct. when considering the private salarieds and the self-employed. To some

⁹⁹ A factor analysis shows that the three variables have high loadings on the same dimension. The reliability test gives a Cronbach's alpha value of about 0.8. Unfortunately, the very low number of respondents in the survey for the Danish People's Party and the Northern League made too uncertain the results for the Danish and Italian cases. The answers were recoded: 1 Very much/much concerned; 2 concerned only to a certain extent; 3 Not so much/not at all concerned.

¹⁰⁰ There are though some relevant differences within the parties, as shown by the values of the standard deviations: SPÖ: 1.72, ÖVP: 1.78; Grüne: 1.67 and FPÖ: 1.79.

degree, this should help to understand the relationship between the stronger support that the Danish People's Party has achieved over the years among the manual workers and the development of the party politics in a pro-welfare direction. The Danish People's Party leadership has on more than one occasion said that the party is today the only real carrier of the genuine and traditional social democratic values and principles.

The transformation of the radical right party agenda towards pro-welfare politics seems also to entail an explicit rupture with the liberal or neoliberal legacies. In this sense, the launching of the Danish People's Party allowed it to make the pro-welfare profile a formal and explicit 'ingredient' of the party ideology. This is also what allegedly happened to the Austrian Freedom Party in 2005, when the exit of Jörg Haider and other party members allowed the FPÖ and the new leadership to develop a welfare oriented profile. In this respect, it is also quite significant that the party today prefers to define itself a *Heimat* and social party (see Chapter 7).

In those cases where the self-employed and the small entrepreneurs still constitute a significant component of the radical right electorate, the agenda continues to promote liberal policy solutions on the economic dimension. The party electoral composition and the particular political and geographical conditions behind its rise and development suggest that the steps in the direction of pro-welfare politics are possible in the case of the Northern League, but they will very likely be limited. The support that the party has recently achieved among manual workers might therefore also trigger some tensions in the future on economic matters.

The findings above suggest, however, that there are still relevant differences between the radical right parties in terms of their position on the economic-distributive dimension, responding to the interests and demands of the parties' electorates. These empirical results thus show that the radical right parties do not necessarily embrace market liberal positions on economic distributive issues as an essential element of their 'winning formula'. The positions on this dimension can be different, mixed in terms of liberal and redistributive preferences and can change over time (cf. also Kitschelt 2007), as it happened in the Danish case and seems to be happening in the Austrian Freedom Party. However, this does not mean that the economic dimension has become irrelevant or inconsequential for the radical right.

9.2 Anti-immigration, Islam and the vote for the radical right

Since about the mid-1980s, immigration has become a strong mobilization issue in several Western European countries, and studies of voter attitudes and reactions have proliferated (e.g. Gaasholth and Togeby 1995; Fetzer 2000; Sniederman, Peri et al. 2000; Nielsen 2004; Frølund Thomsen 2006).

As regards the radical right, several studies (e.g. Gibson 2002; Ivarsflaten 2007; van der Brug and Fennema 2005; Rydgren 2005; Mudde 2007) support the hypothesis that anti-immigration grievances are the main reason for support to the radical right parties. Some scholars (cf. van der Brug, Fennema, Tillie 2000) saw this as evidence that these parties are to

be considered predominantly as single-issue parties, that is anti-immigration parties. In this case, other issues are considered of minor importance when explaining the electoral support to the radical right. The risk of this approach is to oversimplify the more comprehensive ideology developed by these parties over time and to fail to take notice of other attitudes expressed by radical right supporters, which are also important to comprehend the reasons behind their vote. Other scholars have tacitly or more explicitly distinguished between economic and cultural aspects and implications in their analyses of the radical right electorate and ideology (e.g. Kitschelt 1995; Givens 2002; but indirectly also Kriesi et al. 2008). Both approaches emphasise the role played by the cultural and value dimension in relation to the vote for the radical right and in particular by the anti-immigration issue. But being against immigration does not itself explain why. The present section will first of all look at what concerns the voters supporting the radical right when it comes to immigration. Do they worry about the economic consequences for the labour market (unemployment, lower wages) and for society as a whole (welfare state decline)? Or does the cultural impact of what they consider the different set of values and principles that immigrants bring with them feed the negative attitudes towards immigration and integration? Moreover, it is relevant to observe if the different phases of the radical right life cycle have influenced the attitudes towards immigration and immigrants.¹⁰¹

The character of the anti-immigration attitudes among radical right voters and in comparison to other main party voters will be addressed in the first part of this sub-section. The remaining part will look more closely at the effects of immigration attitudes on party choice. Briefly, we will include attitudinal variables in the logistic regression analyses that in Chapter 8 dealt only with the effects of the main socioeconomic background variables on the vote for the radical right. This should help us understand whether the effect of social class and education works through the anti-immigration attitudes.

Several early studies have underlined the close relationship between the position on ethnic and racial interaction and the individual's socioeconomic background and upbringing. Lipset (1960) spoke for example of 'working class authoritarian' attitudes among manual workers, resulting from strictly disciplined family upbringing and basic education and partly explaining the low tolerance in this group toward ethnic and cultural difference and unconformist behaviour.

Other scholarly contributions have emphasised the different socialisation experiences related to education as well as to the individual occupational experiences. In this case, it is not so much the cognitive skills achieved via education that make the difference, but rather the socialising experiences encountered and accumulated in the formative years at school and later at work that are considered to have an impact on the way the individuals understand and relate to the rest of the world (Kitschelt 1995).

¹⁰¹ In relation to the three parties considered here it is particularly with reference to the political influence and government responsibility they have achieved after 2000-2001.

The studies which make reference to the marginalisation hypothesis (e.g. Givens 2002 and 2005: 68-86; Kriesi et al. 2008) also relate the attitudes against immigration to the fear of wage dumping and marginalisation on the labour market that some social groups (in particular unemployed and manual workers) feel in connection with the entry of cheap immigrant labour. An overrepresentation of unemployed and manual workers among the supporters of the radical right could be explained through attitudes indicating an increasing and generalised concern about the consequences of globalisation on the personal economic situation in the present and for the future. Considered in this perspective, immigration would thus become a factor of labour market competition.

Table 9.5 addresses the marginalisation hypothesis and looks at how the Danish People's Party positions itself on explicit questions of whether respondents consider their private economic situation improved or worsened in relation to the near past and what their expectations for the future.

Table 9.5 Experienced improvement or deterioration of own economic situation in last 3 years and expectations 3-5 years into the future. Pct. and PDI (percentage difference index: much/some better – some/much worse). Percentage points

Private economy improved or worsened	2007			PDI 2007	PDI 2005	PDI 2001
	Improved	Unchanged	Worsened			
SF	37	46	17	20	28	28
S	40	43	17	23	26	22
RV	47	43	10	37	33	24
V	52	38	10	42	47	24
K	52	45	3	49	48	21
DF	39	42	19	20	35	9
All	44	43	13	31	37	22

Optimism about the future	Optimist	Neutral	Pessimist	PDI 2007	PDI 2005	PDI 2001 ¹
SF	72	1	28	43	43	72
S	68	0	32	36	34	69
RV	70	1	29	41	45	76
V	80	0	20	60	66	73
K	86	1	13	73	70	77
DF	66	2	32	34	30	41
All	73	1	26	47	48	68

Source: Danish Election Survey 2005-2007.

Questions:

- How is your own economic situation compared to three years ago? (much better; somewhat better; the same; somewhat worse; much worse)

- If we look 3-5 years ahead, do you feel optimistic about your economic situation, somewhat optimistic, a little worried or very worried about your economic situation?

¹ The question in 2001 was slightly different:

- All in all I am rather optimistic about how Denmark and the Danes will do in the future (agree; disagree)

In comparison to the other voters, the supporters of the Danish People's Party experienced in the period 2001-2007 less improvement of their personal economic situation and they are

comparatively less optimistic when they think about the development 3-5 years into the future. If their position is much more negative than the Conservatives' and the Liberals' (more than 40 pct. of their voters answered positively to both questions in 2005 and 2007) it is not so different from the balance percentages points between optimists and pessimists registered among the left wing parties (S and SF), with the exception of 2001, when very few Danish People's Party supporters had experienced an improvement of their economy. However, based on these results it would be difficult to maintain that the DPP voters are more marginalised than others, also in respect to their socioeconomic profile.

The same, although in a very different social and political context, can be argued in relation to the Northern League. Table 9.6 reports variables which are similar to the Danish case, seen within the Italian electoral framework.

Table 9.6 Experienced improvement or deterioration of own economic situation in recent years and expectations 3-5 years into the future. Pct. and PDI (percentage difference index: much/some better – some/much worse). Percentage points.

Private economy improved or worsened	2006			PDI	PDI	PDI
	Improved	Unchanged	Worsened	2008	2006	2001
Prc	5	38	56	-49	-51	4
Ulivo	3	47	50	-37	-47	7
UDC	6	61	32	-47	-26	3
FI	10	57	33	-58	-23	-15
AN	5	63	32	.	-27	-4
LN	3	71	26	-56	-23	-5
All	5	52	43	-47	-38	-3

Optimism about the future	2006			PDI	PDI	PDI
	Optimist	Neutral	Pessimist	2008 ¹	2006	2001
Prc	11	42	47	-69	-36	16
Ulivo	12	49	39	-29	-27	21
UDC	21	60	19	-12	2	47
FI	28	55	17	37	11	50
AN	27	53	20	.	7	55
LN	24	57	19	26	5	42
All	18	51	31	-4	-13	38

Source: ITANES 2001-2008.

For 2008 the parties are as indicated under Table 9.3.

Questions:

- In your opinion, has your family's economic situation in the last year become: much/somewhat worse; the same; much/somewhat better.

- If you look at the future, how will your family's economic situation be 3-5 years from now? Much/somewhat worse; the same; much/somewhat better.

¹ In 2008 respondents were only asked about the Italian economy in 3-5 years and not about the family's economic situation.

In terms of general pessimism and experienced deterioration of the family economy, the position of the Northern League voters does not differ so much from that of the liberal party Forza Italia. The supporters of the Northern League do not express particular concern for the future,

either; on the contrary, it seems that their optimism increases when the party is in office (cf. results in Table 9.6 for 2001 and 2008). Unfortunately, no equivalent data were found for the Austrian Freedom Party.

Negative feelings towards immigrants could also be activated by the idea that they are undeserving recipients of welfare services and benefits, who undermine the bases of the welfare state for those who have ‘paid for it’.

In short, there are both socioeconomic and cultural/value aspects that need to be addressed when considering the anti-immigration attitudes in relation to the radical right vote.

Going to the empirical analysis, a preliminary observation made on the basis of four questions (Table 9.7) and dealing primarily with socioeconomic implications of immigration shows that in 2002-03, the Danes seemed less worried than Italians and Austrians about the possibility that immigrants can bring down the average wages on the labour market. At the same time, people in Denmark express a rather negative opinion about the impact of immigration on the Danish economy. In Denmark immigrants are seen as passive recipients of welfare benefits and social services, rather than active contributors. Immigration is therefore considered a cost rather than an economic gain for the Danish society.

Table 9.7 Immigrants, job competition and marginalization fear. Mean values. Higher values correspond to less concern for immigrants as competitors on the labour market.

	Immigration brings down average wages			Immigrants harm economic prospects of poor			Immigrants unemployed should be sent home			Immigrants take jobs away		
	DK	IT	AT	DK	IT	AT	DK	IT	AT	DK	IT	AT
All	62	56	51	54	51	44	61	42	50	56	46	47
Radical right party*	52	43	36	42	42	26	43	28	29	47	41	39
Liberal/Cons. party ¹	62	56	51	54	50	43	58	39	48	56	44	47
Social Democratic party ²	63	56	48	53	51	40	61	46	49	57	50	45
Libertarian left-wing party ³	67	62	59	64	57	58	73	46	69	63	46	55

Source: ESS 2002-2003. *Only 9 Northern League respondents, 76 FPÖ and 94 DF.

¹ Respectively: Venstre (V); Forza Italia (FI); ÖVP.

² Socialdemokrater (S); Partito Democratico della Sinistra (DS) and SPÖ.

³ Radikale Venstre (RV); Rifondazione Comunista (RC); Grüne.

The immigration question started to gain relevance in Denmark during the late 1980s, but ‘matured’ during the 1990s. The percentage of Danish voters mentioning immigration among the most important problems politicians should deal with went from 7 pct. in 1990 to 22 pct. in 2001 and 17 pct. in 2005 (cf. Van der Brugge and Voss 2007). Particularly in 2001, the electoral campaign was strongly influenced by the immigration question and the surveys of that year clearly indicate that immigration was among the most important issues on the political agenda of many Danish voters (cf. Goul Andersen, 2003) regardless of their political position and attitudes.

However, the perception that immigrants represented a threat to the survival of the Danish nation, culture and identity became more and more relevant with the years. Table 9.8

shows the position of the DPP voters in relation to two questions dealing with immigration as a threat to the Danish national culture and security.

Table 9.8 Attitudes towards immigration among the DF and other Danish party voters. PDI (percentage difference index: strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree). Percentage points.

	SF	S	RV	V	K	DF ¹	All
Immigration a threat against national culture							
1994	-56	-1	-49	8	8	74	-2
1998	-62	-9	-70	15	-1	73	-5
2001	-66	-15	-81	9	-6	73	-5
2005	-60	-17	-66	16	-6	76	-3
2007	-55	-24	-81	20	-15	69	-9
Muslim countries a security threat							
1994	-40	-12	-9	-2	-21	35	-11
1998	-42	2	-57	18	10	65	3
2001	-64	-7	-62	17	3	64	0
2005	-48	-1	-54	32	-3	74	8
2007	-28	4	-36	53	34	81	21

Source: Danish Election Survey 1994-2007. (N(s) as indicated under Table 9.1).

¹ Progress Party in 1994.

Wordings:

- Immigration constitutes a threat to our national culture (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/ disagree).

- In the long run the Muslim ('Arab' in electoral survey 1994) countries constitute a serious threat to Denmark's security (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree).

As shown in Table 9.8, the DPP voters are undoubtedly the most concerned about the impact of immigration on the Danish culture and identity. Since the 1990s, more than 70 pct. of the supporters of the Danish People's Party have agreed with the statement that immigration represents a threat to Danish culture. Compared to the Danish People's Party, the Social Liberals (RV) and the Socialist People's Party voters (SF) have the opposite attitude. The Social Liberals in particular have become the Danish People's Party counter-pole on attitudes towards immigrants and refugees. This has had important consequences for the party political competition and strategies, since the Social Liberals has historically (since at least the 1930s) acted as a potential coalition party 'in the middle' for government formation both for the left wing and for the non-socialist parties (on this cf. Green Pedersen 2008). The position among the Liberal (V) voters on this issue is also interesting; in 2001 the percentage difference between those who saw immigration as a threat to the national culture and those who did not, was about 9 pct. in favour of the former; six years later this had increased to about 20 pct. (see Table 9.8 above). A different development can be observed among the Conservatives (K), whose position has gone in the opposite direction (from -6 pct. in 2001 to -15 pct. in 2007; cf. Table 9.8 above).

Over the past decade another issue has met increasing consensus among the Danish People's Party's and other voters: that Muslim countries represent a security threat. Particularly DPP voters, but also the electorate supporting the two government parties (V+K) ex-

pressed high concern for the threat from Muslim countries to national security. In a short term perspective, this position has likely been fuelled by events such as 9/11 and its aftermath and more recently by what today is known as the Mohammed cartoons controversy, which started with twelve cartoons, most of them depicting the Islamic prophet Mohammed, published by the Danish broadsheet *Jyllands Posten* in September 2005. However, concerns about Islam have been on the agenda of certain segments of the electorate since at least the 1990s, and they have been especially pronounced among the DPP voters¹⁰² (cf. Table 9.8).

In direct contrast to the positions of the Danish People's Party electorate we find the Social Liberals (RV) and the Social People's Party voters. Across the years the supporters of these two parties have been much less worried about Islam and the Muslim threat compared to the rest of the Danish electorate and particularly to the DPP voters. In this case, the different socioeconomic backgrounds and levels of education characterising the electoral composition of these parties might help explain the different attitudes on immigration. This question will be addressed later in this section.

Another dimension related to attitudes towards immigration deals with its economic and social costs and with the problems that Western societies have counting immigrants as part of the same community with common rights and responsibilities (cf. Alesina and Glaeser 2004). In terms of competition theory (cf. Olzak 1992), the attitudes towards immigrants and refugees could therefore be read as a reaction from those voters who believe that immigrants can negatively affect the labour market conditions and the level of the welfare state. In this case, the positive attitudes towards more public spending in traditional welfare areas that characterise the Danish People's Party supporters turn negative when it comes to spending more on immigrants and refugees (see Table 9.9).

¹⁰² However, this does not automatically make the DPP voters xenophobic, Islamophobic or even racists. About this cf. Rydgren 2008.

Table 9.9 Attitudes towards public spending for immigration and refugees and immigrant rights to welfare state among the DF and other Danish party voters. PDI (percentage difference index: too little money – too much money; strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree). Percentage points.

More money to refugees and immigrants	SF	S	RV	V	K	DF	All
1994	4	-36	-19	-48	-44	-81	-38
1998	1	-37	2	-59	-52	-86	-42
2001	25	-18	21	-52	-54	-83	-34
2005	39	4	41	-31	-31	-69	-13
2007	51	19	58	-19	-9	-53	5
Refugees and immigrants same welfare rights							
1994	12	-46	-6	-51	-49	-92	-42
1998	25	-27	21	-51	-46	-76	-31
2001	28	-12	27	-51	-43	-77	-28
2005	22	-2	22	-38	-37	-68	-20
2007	29	4	46	-33	-29	-58	-10

Source: Danish Election Survey 1994-2007. . (N(s) as indicated under Table 9.1).

¹ Progress Party in 1994.

Wordings:

- Do you think the public spends too much money, a suitable amount or too little money on refugees and immigrants?

- Should refugees and immigrants have the same rights as Danes to social security, even though they are not Danish citizens? (strongly agree/agree; strongly disagree/disagree).

Particularly among the DPP voters there is a widespread opinion that too much public money was spent on refugees and immigrants. However, it is worth noticing that between 2001 and 2007 the difference between those who think that ‘too much’ public money is spent on immigrants and refugees and those who think that ‘too little’ goes to this purpose, went from 83 pct. to 53 pct. A similar trend toward a less negative position can be observed in relation to the question whether immigrants and refugees should have the same welfare rights as Danish citizens (see Table 9.9). Also among the Liberals and the Conservatives, the attitudes towards these issues of economic character in relation to immigration have in recent years met less restrictive positions. This trend might be partly interpreted as the effect of the restrictive policies that have been approved within this field since 2001 and perhaps partly influenced by the debate that animated the 2007 electoral campaign about the poor economic and living conditions of asylum seekers in Denmark, particularly children. Interestingly, the development toward less negative attitudes involved in particular the economic implications of immigration, whereas the same cannot be said for immigration grievances related to the cultural and value dimension (cf. Table 9.8).

The Italian voters are also rather polarized when it comes to attitudes towards immigration, although to a lesser extent than in Denmark.¹⁰³ Table 9.10 includes four questions about immigration; the first two questions are mainly related to cultural and identity implications in relation to immigration, the last two deal respectively with civic rights (the right to vote at administrative elections) and labour market consequences (immigration as a threat to em-

¹⁰³ The eta value estimated for the Italian parties in relation to immigration perceived as a cultural threat is 0.35 for 2008, which is a little lower than the eta 0.45 for Denmark in 2005.

ployment). Overall, the voters of the centre-left-wing parties are more positive towards immigration than the major parties of the right wing (FI, LN and AN). In this context, the Northern League voters are the most concerned about the impact of immigration on different social and economic aspects of the Italian society, also compared to Alleanza Nazionale.

Table 9.10 Attitudes towards different aspects of immigration among Northern League and other main Italian party voters. PDI (percentage difference index: strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree). Percentage points.

Immigrants a threat to identity and culture	RC	Ulivo	UDC	FI	AN	LN	All
2001	-46	-41	-21	-6	-5	18	-21
2006	-41	-21	12	32	37	62	1
2008	-70	-55	-14	11	.	18	-24
Immigrants should be allowed to build mosques							
2006	13	-13	-36	-49	-40	-60	-24
2008	35	11	11	-49	.	-71	-16
Immigrants with regular permit should vote at municipal elections							
2001	32	36	15	14	8	5	22
2006	59	52	28	17	14	-28	36
Immigration a threat to employment							
2001	-26	-36	-42	4	-2	13	-15
2006	-32	-22	-3	25	23	42	-4
2008	-62	-51	-30	15	.	6	-22

Source: ITANES 2001-2008.

Wordings:

- Immigrants constitute a threat to our national culture and our identity: (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree).
- It is right to allow Muslims to build mosques on Italian soil: (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree).
- Immigrants represent a threat to employment (of Italian workers): (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree).
- Some people say that immigrants, if they are legal and pay taxes, should vote in administrative elections in the municipality where they live. What do you think about it? (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree).

Similarly to the Danish People's Party, also the Northern League voters agreed with the statement that immigrants constitute a threat to national culture and identity. Taken as a whole, the attitudes toward this issue have become more positive in 2008 (see Table 9.10). Among the Northern League supporters, the difference between those who considered immigration a threat to the national culture and those who did not, changed from 62 pct. in 2006 to 18 pct. in 2008, but remained highest when compared to the other voters. The supporters of the two other major right-wing parties, FI and AN,¹⁰⁴ follow closely: respectively 32 pct. and 37 pct. in 2006 and 11 pct. in 2008 of the voters of these two parties considered immigrants as a cultural threat.

¹⁰⁴ At the 2008 election FI and AN ran together in the People of Freedom (Popolo della Libertà, PdL) party. The new party was first launched by Berlusconi in November 2007 and was officially founded at the first party congress in March 2009.

The Northern League's position on construction of mosques on Italian soil is very negative: in 2008 about 71 pct. of the party supporters continued to oppose. This attitude is for the most part shared by the voters of Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale (PDI -49 pct. in 2008; see Table 9.10) and also the average percentage difference among Italians indicates that there is still general opposition. The supporters of the Northern League are the only ones who are against giving immigrants with a regular residence permit the right to vote at the administrative. This measure, which was approved in several other Western European countries already in the 1980s, is strongly supported among the electorate of the left-wing parties and to some extent also by centre-right-wing voters.

Compared to the other immigration issues, the Northern League voters seem to be a little less concerned about the consequences of immigration for the labour market. Between 2006 and 2008, the opinion balance between the supporters of the Northern League who saw immigration as a threat to employment and those who disagreed went from 42 pct. to 6 pct. This might be explained by the fact that the Northern League gets the strongest electoral support in the North of the country, where the immigrant labour force is a vital factor in some industrial sectors. This would also suggest that in relation to immigration, the voters of the Northern League are much more worried about the impact on culture, identity and on law and order rather than on the labour market.

Similar concerns about the consequences of immigration on society can be observed among the supporters of the Austrian Freedom Party. Table 9.10 presents similar, though not completely equivalent, questions from ESS 2002-03 which can be compared to those already introduced for the other two parties in relation to attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. The first two questions of Table 9.10 deal with immigration mainly perceived as a cultural threat and as a disaggregating element for the survival of the traditions and cultural habits of the Austrian community. The third question brings in the view of immigrants as competitors on the labour market and relates to the implications advanced by the marginalisation hypothesis. Whether immigrants should be entitled to enjoy the same political and civic rights as national citizens is the issue brought up by the fourth question.

In 2002, 51 pct. of the Austrian Freedom Party electorate declared that the cultural life of the country is generally undermined by immigrants (see Table 9.11). By contrast, among the ÖVP voters, the party that from 2000 until 2005 was in government with the FPÖ, only 26 pct. agreed with these statements. On the political left wing, 21 pct. of the SPÖ voters and 7 pct. of the Greens considered the Austrian culture undermined by immigration.

In line with this position, cultural diversity was perceived as a threat to the Austrian culture and national awareness; 63 pct. of the Austrian Freedom Party supporters agreed that it is best for the country if people share the same customs and traditions, in comparison to 49 pct. among ÖVP voters and respectively 34 pct. and 14 pct. among the SPÖ and the Greens.

However, also to the question whether average wages and salaries are generally brought down by people coming from outside, 64 pct. of the FPÖ supporters expressed agreement.

This position was followed by 41 pct. of the SPÖ voters, who expressed more concern on this particular issue than the ÖVP (see Table 9.11). The FPÖ seemed to have a less negative position on the more general question of whether people who come to live in Austria should be given the same rights as everyone; 42 pct. of the FPÖ voters are in favour of extending the rights to all and 42 pct. are against. This issue finds a general positive attitude among the supporters of the other parties and in particular among the Greens (cf. Table 9.11).

Table 9.11 Attitudes towards immigration among the Austrian Freedom Party and other main Austrian party voters. PDI (percentage difference index: strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree). Percentage points.

Cultural life enriched or undermined by immigrants	2002			PDI 2002	N
	Cultural life undermined	Neutral	Cultural life enriched		
Grüne	7	10	83	-76	233
SPÖ	21	27	52	-31	461
ÖVP	26	28	46	-20	563
FPÖ	51	29	20	31	70
All	22	24	49	-27	
Better for Austria if most share same customs/traditions	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Grüne	14	24	62	-48	233
SPÖ	34	30	36	-2	461
ÖVP	49	27	25	24	563
FPÖ	63	24	13	50	70
All	39	26	33	6	
Average wages and salaries brought down by people coming to Austria	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Grüne	24	29	47	-23	220
SPÖ	41	23	36	5	431
ÖVP	31	35	34	-31	530
FPÖ	64	19	16	48	67
All	33	25	32	1	
Immigrants same rights as nationals	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Grüne	80	10	10	70	228
SPÖ	54	18	28	26	449
ÖVP	48	24	28	20	552
FPÖ	42	16	42	0	69
All	56	19	25	31	

Source: ESS 2002-2003.

Wordings:

- Would you say that Austria is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? (0 thru 4= Austria's cultural life undermined; 5= Neutral; 6 thru 10= cultural life enriched)
- Is it better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions? (strongly agree/agree; neither/nor; strongly disagree/disagree).
- Average wages and salaries are generally brought down by people coming to live and work here (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree).

Similarly to the Danish People's Party and to the Northern League, the supporters of the Austrian Freedom Party stand out in comparison to the other voters as being the most sceptical

about immigration. Comparatively, the supporters of the three parties have over the years developed similar positions on the immigration issue. In particular, the perception of immigrants as a threat to national identity and culture seems to have become one of the main concerns and to have a strong effect on the support for the radical right. The following section conducts a closer analysis of the effect of different attitudinal issues on the radical right vote.

9.3 Considering the effects of the voters' socioeconomic background and political attitudes on party vote

At the end of Chapter 8 we looked at the effects that the main socioeconomic variables have on the radical right vote. Here, we look at how the socioeconomic variables 'react' to the introduction of the attitudinal variables that have to do with the issues so far discussed in this chapter, namely welfare and immigration. This will allow to control for spurious correlations between variables and to look whether there are intervening variables that can help explaining the socioeconomic variations characterising the vote to the three parties.

To evaluate the effect of these issues on the radical right vote, the independent variables considered refer to the general attitude towards immigration as a threat to culture and identity and the variable indicating different positions towards welfare spending. The attitudinal variables have been recoded and given values from -1 to +1 (with 0 as neutral position); positive values reflect the positions generally ascribed to the radical right on the economic and cultural/value dimensions of politics (neoliberal and anti-immigration) and thus indicate a left-leaning bias in the case of negative figures and a right-leaning bias with positive numbers.

Table 9.12, in which Model II is carried over from Chapter 8, shows that introducing the variable on welfare spending contradicts the interpretation that being a voter with neoliberal standpoints increases the probability of voting for the Danish People's Party. Instead we find that it is to some extent people who favour spending more money to improve the welfare who show a higher propensity to vote for the Danish People's Party. The other issues related to the economic dimension are of a more general character and they deal with the voters' position on the issues considered in Table 9.2 about government control with private firms, about income differences and the level of social reforms. Interestingly, the coefficients for the variables dealing with government control over private business and about income differences in the country are positive and statistically significant (see Table 9.12). This might suggest that voters supporting the Danish People's Party are welfare oriented when it comes to concrete issues (more money to hospitals, pensioners and unemployed), but at the same time they prefer to have a degree of freedom from government intervention and control over the private initiative and do not believe that the state has to increase taxes to level income differences. These attitudes also allowed the Danish People's Party to work together with the Liberals and Conservatives on economic matters.

Table 9.12 Effect of different main socioeconomic background and issue variables on the vote for the Danish People's Party (2005). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Male	0.24	0.28	0.24	0.29
Cohort (before 1945)	-0.20	-0.08	-0.59*	-0.43
Manual worker	0.05	0.05	-0.05	-0.05
Self-employed	-1.08*	-1.00*	-1.15*	-0.96*
Public salariat	-0.91*	-0.86*	-0.75*	-0.70*
Private salariat	-0.60*	-0.71*	-0.63*	-0.65*
Higher education	-1.08*	-1.01*	-0.25	-0.31
Less welfare spending		-0.59*		-0.38*
Less government control over privates		0.20*		0.16
Income differences		0.17*		0.10
Less social reforms		0.14		0.01
Immigration a cultural threat			0.97*	0.97*
Muslim countries a threat			0.48*	0.39*
Danish workers first			0.30*	0.27*
Constant	-1.44	-1.84	-1.97	-2.28
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.08	0.11	0.27	0.27

Source: Danish Election Survey 2005.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

As concerns the effects of the attitudes towards immigration, the findings confirm what has already been said in previous studies about the strong impact that immigration related issues have on the vote for the radical right (e.g. Ivarsflaten 2008(b)). In the case of the Danish People's Party it clearly emerges that the variables that control for attitudes towards immigration strengthen the degree of correlation (here 0.27 R² Nagelkerke) between the dependent variable and the independent variables. At the same time, some of the socioeconomic background variables become weaker predictors of the vote, once these issues are included in the model. Most noteworthy, higher education loses most of its (negative) effect on the support for the party. The coefficients in Model IV of Table 9.12 suggest that among voters who perceive immigration as a threat to national culture and identity, Muslim countries as a threat to national security and think that Danish workers have to be employed first, there is a higher probability for a vote for the Danish People's Party. In this sense, these attitudes toward immigration have to be seen in close relationship to the socioeconomic profile of the Danish People's Party.

Finally, Model V of Table 9.12 shows that the introduction of the independent variables dealing with immigration weakens the effect of the attitudes towards economic issues and to some extent also of welfare spending. As concerns the immigration attitudes, the coefficients are positive and all of them significant, which is in line with our expectations about the role of these issues as intervening variables on the vote for the Danish People's Party.

Looking at Table 9.13 about the Austrian Freedom Party and as already observed in Chapter 8, we find that social class has a strong and significant effect on party vote also after controlling for education. The coefficients in the table show that being a manual worker strongly increases the probability of voting for the FPÖ (in relation to the reference category

represented by people outside the labour market). In terms of class composition, this makes the FPÖ similar to the Danish People's Party. However, it is also among lower skilled white collars that the Austrian party gets some electoral support (cf. Table 9.13).

Table 9.13 Effect of different main socioeconomic background and issue variables on the vote for the Austrian Freedom Party (2002-03). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Male	0.51	0.46	0.36	0.41
Cohort (before 1945)	0.71	0.69	0.27	0.27
Manual worker	1.17*	1.06*	0.85	0.85
Self-employed	0.56	0.59	0.23	0.32
Low skilled white collar	0.95*	0.87*	0.82	0.96*
High skilled white collar	-1.08	-1.12	-1.25*	-1.19
Service worker	0.51	0.58	0.40	0.25
Higher education	0.18	0.15	0.39	0.41
Less government intervention in economy		-0.07	-0.03	
Income differences		0.30*	0.37*	
Immigration a cultural threat			0.63*	0.61*
Immigrants lower wages			0.45*	0.39*
Immigrants harm economic prospects for poor			0.45*	0.47*
Constant	-3.61	-3.37	-3.42	-3.65
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.08	0.08	0.19	0.17

Source: ESS 2002-03.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

Examining the other models, it emerges that the effect of issue voting weakens the importance of social class. Introducing the two independent variables on attitudes towards the economy does not strengthen the effect on party vote. The coefficients are small, but significant in relation to the question about income difference, on which the supporters of the party hold a neo-liberal position, asserting that the government should not intervene to reduce differences of income.

In line with the expectations, the results of model IV in Table 9.13 show that anti-immigration attitudes have a strong effect on the FPÖ vote which is markedly positive, particularly when dealing with the consequences of immigration on the country's culture and identity. However, also the variable holding immigrants to lower average wages on the labour market and to harm the economic prospects for the poor has statistically significant effects on the vote for the FPÖ.

As observed at the end of Chapter 8, the socioeconomic background variables highlight a more varied electoral composition of the vote for the Northern League compared to the Danish People's Party and quite interestingly a strong propensity for support among low skilled white collars in relation to the reference category here represented by people outside the labour market. In Table 9.14 we can see how introducing the attitudinal variables affects the vote for the Italian party.

Table 9.14 Effect of different main socioeconomic background and issue variables on the vote for the Northern League (2008). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Male	-0.11	-0.12	0.14	0.11
Cohort (before 1945)	-0.21	-0.24	-0.35	-0.38
Manual worker	0.32	0.34	0.14	0.14
Self-employed	0.58*	0.44	0.42	0.30
High skilled white collar	0.10	0.13	0.06	0.08
Low skilled white collars	0.75*	0.74*	0.77*	0.77*
Higher education	-0.34	-0.33	-0.07	-0.10
Private firms more freedom		0.42*		0.34*
Less government intervention in economy		0.11		0.08
Immigration a cultural threat			0.28*	0.26*
No allowance to build mosques			0.73*	0.70*
Immigration a threat to employment			0.01	-0.01
Constant	-2.30	-2.28	-2.78	-2.72
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.02	0.05	0.11	0.12

Source: ITANES 2008.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

As far as the economic dimension is concerned, the prediction is also for the Northern League to find an effect from attitudes that tend to support a neoliberal orientation. For this purpose, the two variables included in the regression model are about more freedom for private firms to hire and fire and less government intervention in the economy. Interestingly, only the former has a positive coefficient, which is significantly different from zero, indicating that the Northern League voters have a liberal attitude on freedom for private entrepreneurs in matters such as hiring and firing workers.

Also in the case of the Northern League, the attitudes towards immigration have a stronger effect on vote. In particular the position that immigration is a threat to culture and identity and the opposition against building mosques on Italian soil have the most significant effect. For immigration as a threat to employment conditions, the coefficient is very small and not statistically significant. This suggests that the main concern about immigration among the supporters of the Northern League is not so much marginalisation on the labour market, but rather the effects on culture, identity and law and order.

9.4 Protest and distrust fuelling the radical right support?

Until at least the end of the 1990s one of the main explanations of electoral support for and the subsequent breakthrough of the radical right was that this vote was a populist reaction especially from those segments of the population that felt politically marginalised (e.g. Betz 1994; Taggart 2000). As discussed in earlier chapters (see e.g. Chapter 2), the nature and character of the populist protest have been differently explained and seldom with the necessary precision that allows a clear empirical operationalisation of this reaction. Recent studies (cf. Taguieff 2002; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008: 1-11) have tried to update the concept of populism and to relate it to the new times, looking more specifically at the social, political and

ideological conditions that in some countries have contributed to encourage and support populist reactions.

The fact that populism is neither historically nor sociologically exclusively a right-wing political phenomenon (see Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Canovan 1981; Laclau 2005) has not prevented that – at least in the Western European context – the dominant tendency until recently was to ascribe the ideological and social features of populism mainly to the parties of the right and particularly to the radical right-wing parties (cf. Betz 1994; Taggart 1996 and 2000). The populist protest hypothesis (see Chapter 2) has been employed in particular when the radical right parties were still at the periphery of the political system (see e.g. Bergh 2004), a position that allowed these parties to abound with anti-establishment politics, without having direct responsibility for concrete, realized politics. This allowed the radical right parties to amplify the rhetoric about the sovereignty of people over the political elites, to blame the government for its policies and to emphasise the role of the party/movement (and particularly of its leader) as the ultimate guardian of the rights and interests of the people. Considering that today, many radical right parties are or have been involved in the decision making processes and in government activity, there is reason to believe that this process encouraged a process of ‘normalisation’ both in terms of party ideology and of the levels of trust in politics and politicians among radical right supporters.¹⁰⁵ In any case, in the present context it is difficult to speak about generalised protest in relation to the radical right, at least for the three cases here considered.

However, all three parties have in different phases of their life cycle and with different degrees and rhetoric attacked the political establishment and supported politics that asked for a more direct relationship between the needs and demands of the people and the politics approved by the government. This does not necessarily make them protest parties (cf. Van der Brug, Fennema, Tillie 2000), but it has enabled them to appeal to voters who are disenchanted with the political institutions, have lower levels of trust in politics and find it difficult to understand the political decisions and initiatives taken by the government. Pasquino (2008: 15–29) has observed that the populist reaction implies the intervention of different political, social and ideological conditions that facilitate the rise and resistance of populism and its different forms. This means that the opportunities for a populist reaction can be different from country to country and they can change over time. Similarly, also the social and psychological conditions that at the individual level are considered to favour the support of parties with a populist appeal (such as social and political isolation, political distrust, low political efficacy, and lack of civic engagement) can be subject to change.

The following paragraphs look at the levels of political trust and political efficacy among the supporters of the three radical right parties and at the way they have developed

¹⁰⁵ This approach has been partly tested by Sönderlund and Kestilä (2007) on the ESS 2002–03, who concluded that party identification of radical right-wing voters does not seem to increase their trust in parliament and politicians.

over time, and examines to what extent these issues have actually influenced the vote for the three radical right parties.

Starting with the Danish case, the different levels of political trust in the Danish electorate are based on the question whether political leaders can generally be trusted to make the right decisions for the country. Table 9.15 shows the Danish percentage differences between pragmatic trust and political distrust.

Table 9.15 Political trust among Danish People's Party and other main parties. PDI (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree).

Political trust	SF	S	RV	V	K	DF ¹	All
1994	-1	19	12	12	9	-41	7
1998	11	28	46	16	21	-30	16
2001	8	39	35	50	47	13	36
2005	4	20	18	63	58	26	34
2007	-16	12	4	71	61	37	30

Source: Danish Election Survey 1994-2007.

¹ Progress Party in 1994.

Wordings:

- In general we can trust our political leaders to make the right decisions for the country (strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree).

The level of trust among the party's voters in what the political leaders do for the country has changed from deep distrust to moderate, but positive trust. In 1998, the difference between those who said that they trusted and those who declared they did not trust what politicians decided for the country was -30 pct. among the supporters of the Danish People's Party (see Table 9.15); in 2001, the year the Danish People's Party became an important supporting partner to the V and K government, it changed from negative to positive (+13 pct.) and about six years later, at the 2007 election it reached +37 pct. The level of political trust is still low among the supporters of the Danish People's Party when compared to the Liberal and Conservative voters; however, there is a clear trend in the positive direction that can be ascribed to the effect of the political influence and responsibilities achieved by the party since 2001. The opposite development can be observed among the voters of the parties that from 2001 have been in opposition (S, SF and RV), whose levels of trust have decreased since 2001 (see Table 9.15). The shift of government in 2001, or the 'system change' as it is sometimes referred to now, influenced trust towards more positive levels among the Liberal and the Conservative voters and towards less positive levels among the supporters of the parties at the opposition.

If a high degree of political distrust and disillusionment in politics characterised the DPP voters in the late 1990s, these feelings have given place to much more positive attitudes in recent years. This makes it even more difficult to find evidence of a generalised protest attitude among the DPP voters, if it has ever existed.

External political efficacy is another concept used to explain the voter's belief that he or she understands national and international politics and therefore has influence on the political process (see Lane 1959; Campbell et al. 1960). Low political trust, together with low levels of

political efficacy have also been mentioned in relation to the Danish Progress Party first (cf. Jørgen Nielsen 1976) and later to the Danish People's Party electorate (eg. Andersen 2000). The position of the DPP voters on (internal) political efficacy was explored by means of an index that was constructed on the basis of four classical questions in the Danish Election Survey (see Goul Andersen 2000):

- Sometimes politics is so complicated that people like me cannot really understand what is going on.
- I do not really think it is so difficult to decide in political matters.
- I know so little about the EU that I have almost given up following what happens.
- When economists discuss the economic policy I only understand little of what they are talking about.

A factor analysis on these variables on the 2005 Danish election survey shows that the four variables have quite high loadings on the same factor and the reliability test gives an alpha value of about 0,7, which is about the same as in previous surveys (cf. Goul Andersen 2000: 137). The political efficacy index obtained from the above mentioned items and going from the minimum value of +4 to the maximum of +20 was then recoded into three different positions indicating low, medium and high levels of political efficacy. This implies that lower scores respond to low internal political efficacy, whereas higher scores indicate higher levels of political efficacy. The results are shown in Table 9.16.

Table 9.16 Political efficacy among Danish People's Party voters and other main party voters. Percentages based on index of political efficacy.

		1994	1998	2001	2005	2007
SF	Low	34	19	18	20	29
	Medium	37	43	45	49	46
	High	29	38	37	31	26
S	Low	49	35	33	32	37
	Medium	35	40	45	46	44
	High	16	25	22	21	20
RV	Low	40	20	13	18	24
	Medium	34	29	46	43	45
	High	26	51	41	39	31
V	Low	38	24	29	21	25
	Medium	36	42	43	49	47
	High	26	34	28	30	28
K	Low	24	18	25	18	14
	Medium	39	34	40	47	44
	High	37	48	35	35	42
DF	Low	59	46	36	36	37
	Medium	29	29	44	49	48
	High	12	25	20	15	15
All	Low	41	29	29	26	29
	Medium	34	39	43	47	45
	High	25	32	28	27	26

Source: Danish Election Survey 1994-2007.

At the 2007 election, the DPP voters were still characterised by very low levels of (internal) political efficacy. However, the picture does not seem so different from the voters of the So-

cial Democrats, whereas we find the higher scores on this index among the voters of the Social Liberals and the Conservatives. Despite the political influence achieved by the Danish People's Party after 2001, little improvement can be registered in the levels of internal efficacy among the Danish People's Party supporters, suggesting that this is an effect of the voters' educational level.

The comparison with the Northern League in Italy is complicated by the lack of equivalent variables in the Italian data. However, it is important to mention the specific political conditions, opportunities and the political culture characterising the Italian case, which, according to some scholars, has made Italy a country where many forms of populisms and protest can co-exist and thrive (see e.g. Tarchi 2008: 84-99).

Protest, political trust and political efficacy must therefore be considered in relation to the specific Italian social and political context, where feelings of disbelief and political distrust are widespread among the whole population and are not exclusive to the supporters of a specific party. At least three questions relate to political trust and efficacy in the data:

- Sometimes politics is so complicated that one can not understand what is really happening.
- People like me have no influence on what the government does.
- People we elect to parliament soon lose contact with their voters.

The first two questions have to do with political efficacy, whereas the third can shed light on the levels of trust in how much they feel represented by the political leaders elected to parliament. Table 9.17 shows that the supporters of the Northern League feel high political distrust and low political efficacy.

Table 9.17 Political efficacy and political trust among LN voters and other main Italian parties. Percentage of voters agreeing with the statements.

		RC	Ulivo	UDC	FI	AN	LN	All
Politics is too complicated								
	2001	84	82	85	90	83	94	86
	2006	73	78	81	82	80	79	79
	2008	67	72	83	80	-	84	75
People like me have no influence on what the government decides								
	2001	75	78	78	86	80	87	81
	2006	55	68	62	74	71	73	68
	2008	59	67	65	64	-	65	65
Elected politicians loose soon contact with voters								
	1996	79	79	(91)	83	88	92	83
	2001	96	92	(92)	94	93	93	93
	2006	81	87	91	89	90	85	88

Source: ITANES 1996-2008.

However, Table 9.17 shows that also voters of other parties, e.g. Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale, are characterised by low political efficacy and low trust. This does not come as a surprise; Italians are known to be among the populations in Western Europe with the lowest

levels of trust in politicians. These feelings are extended to the main political and legislative organs and institutions, such as the Italian parliament, and even to the Court of Justice (see Table 9.18). Interesting is also the position on EU, towards which the Northern League voters have shown alternate feelings in the course of the years. This is in line with the EU politics developed by the party, which in the 1990s changed from overall pro-EU to a sceptical evaluation of Europe's role in relation to national sovereignty and national politics (see Chapter 6). The attitudes of the LN voters towards some of the most important institutions have remained negative across the years, suggesting that it can still be important for the Northern League to emphasise the differences with the other mainstream parties even if in government. This may also explain why the Northern League has not joined the new centre right party the People of Freedom, launched by Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale.

Table 9.18 Trust in main representative institutions among LN and other main Italian party voters. Percentages for 2006 and PDI (trust very much/some – trust little/very little).

	2006			PDI 2001	PDI 2006	PDI 2008
	Trust very much/some	Do not know	Trust little/ very little			
Trust in the parliament						
RC	53	0	47	-4	6	-50
Ulivo	59	3	38	18	21	-12
UDC	52	3	45	22	7	-26
FI	44	2	54	-9	-10	-2
AN	49	1	50	7	1	.
LN	36	1	63	-9	-27	-30
All	53	2	45	4	8	-15
Trust in the Court of Justice						
RC	67	0	33	11	34	42
Ulivo	69	2	29	25	40	33
UDC	58	3	39	3	19	23
FI	46	2	52	-11	-6	-26
AN	48	0	52	-18	-4	.
LN	34	0	66	-42	-32	-40
All	59	2	39	3	20	3
Trust in parties						
RC	33	1	66	-43	-33	-61
Ulivo	32	1	67	-40	-35	-49
UDC	24	2	74	-45	-50	-47
FI	20	1	79	-59	-59	-45
AN	27	0	73	-49	-46	.
LN	19	0	81	-45	-62	-55
All	28	1	74	-50	-46	-51
Trust in the EU						
RC	65	2	33	29	32	.
Ulivo	71	3	26	49	45	.
UDC	63	5	32	63	31	.
FI	54	4	42	23	12	.
AN	62	3	35	23	27	.
LN	55	1	44	-13	11	.
All	65	3	32	33	33	.

Source: ITANES 2001-2008.

Like the Italian voters, the Austrians have low levels of trust in politicians and in institutions like the parliament and the European Union. FPÖ voters had the lowest levels of trust among the Austrian parties (cf. Table 9.19 below).

The electoral success of the Austrian Freedom Party in the 1990s was interpreted as a voter reaction to mainstream politics. Protest and anti-establishment feelings were seen as strong motivations for the vote for the FPÖ (e.g. Plasser and Ulram 2000). The lack of political trust in Austria at that time is interpreted as an effect of the long period with SPÖ and ÖVP, the so-called Great Coalition, in government. They had governed the country from 1987, fuelling the general opinion that the two parties had centralised the political power and supported patronage and clientelist practices for the division of the country most influential posts. Thus, one of the main reasons that the FPÖ supporters gave for their vote in 1999 was the demand for political change and a rejection of the Grand Coalition (27 pct.) (Plasser and Ulram 2000: 228-230).

Table 9.19 Trust in main representative institutions among FPÖ and other main Austrian party voters. Percentages and PDI (trust very much/some – trust little/very little).

Trust in parliament	2002			PDI 1999	PDI 2002
	Trust very much/ some	Neutral	Trust little/none		
SPÖ	38	25	37	2	1
ÖVP	46	28	26	-2	20
FPÖ	38	25	37	-47	1
Grüne	45	24	31	-29	14
LiF	41	12	47	-2	-6
All	40	24	36	-19	4
Trust in the legal system					
SPÖ	61	15	24	43	37
ÖVP	63	19	18	55	45
FPÖ	54	22	24	5	30
Grüne	57	19	24	33	33
LiF	35	24	41	68	-6
All	60	18	22	34	38
Trust in politicians					
SPÖ	16	18	66	.	-50
ÖVP	24	20	56	.	-32
FPÖ	14	11	75	.	-61
Grüne	15	16	69	.	-54
LiF	0	13	87	.	-87
All	19	18	63	.	-44
Trust in the EU					
SPÖ	24	23	53	-9	-29
ÖVP	27	22	51	-12	-24
FPÖ	13	24	63	-51	-50
Grüne	34	25	41	3	-7
LiF	25	31	44	23	-19
All	26	20	47	-25	-21

Source: EVS 1999; ESS 2002-03.

As shown in Table 9.19 above, the supporters of the FPÖ had, particularly in the late 1990s, very low levels of trust in basically all the main political institutions. The positions seem a little more positive a few years later in 2002. At that time, the FPÖ had been in government with the ÖVP for a couple of years, which might help to explain the improvement. However, the levels of trust in politicians in general and in the European Parliament are low also among the supporters of the other parties, although the FPÖ voters remain among the most distrustful.

To get the complete comparative perspective over this issue, Table 9.20 shows how the DPP voters position themselves in relation to institutional trust.

Table 9.20 Trust in main representative institutions among DF and other main Danish party voters. Percentages and PDI (trust very much/some – trust little/very little).

Trust in parliament	2002			PDI 2002
	Trust very much/ some	Neutral	Trust little/none	
SF	64	21	15	49
S	64	22	14	50
RV	77	15	8	69
V	68	18	14	54
K	75	14	11	64
DF	44	22	35	9
All	65	19	16	49
Trust in the legal system				
SF	82	13	5	77
S	78	12	10	68
RV	90	8	2	88
V	78	9	12	66
K	89	4	7	82
DF	59	18	23	36
All	78	11	11	67
Trust in politicians				
SF	55	31	14	41
S	49	30	21	28
RV	68	18	15	53
V	56	22	22	34
K	60	27	13	47
DF	42	18	40	2
All	53	25	22	31
Trust in the EU				
SF	37	24	39	2
S	38	25	37	1
RV	49	23	28	21
V	43	22	35	8
K	47	20	33	14
DF	21	20	59	-38
All	39	23	38	1

Source: ESS 2002-03.

It can be immediately noticed that the Danish voters have comparatively higher levels of trust in the most important political institutions. However, the electorate of the Danish People's Party clearly has least trust in the parliament and in politicians and in particular in the Euro-

pean Parliament (59 pct. of the DPP voters have none or very little trust in the EP). Table 9.20 does not show if the levels of trust among DF supporters have changed in more recent years; however, in relation to political trust and efficacy, it is likely that the positions have remained on the lower side, compared to the other Danish voters.

To conclude, the levels of political efficacy and of the levels of trust in politics and institutions among the supporters of the three radical right parties remain among the lowest within the respective political environments; this despite the political influence and responsibilities achieved by the parties in the last decade or so. Seen in a cross-country perspective, the Danish People's Party shows higher levels of trust in comparison to the Austrian Freedom Party and the Northern League, but this has to be considered in relation to the generally high levels of trust that characterise the Danish society as a whole and which are sharply contrasting with the widespread scepticism and disbelief towards politics and politicians be observed among Italians and partly also among Austrians. However, given the degree of influence and responsibility achieved by several radical right parties in Western Europe, it is difficult, especially today, still to refer to the radical right in terms of a pure reaction against mainstream politics and against the status quo. However, it is still relevant to reflect about the reasons these voters trust politics and institutions much less than most other voters, also when their politics manage to get out from the margins. The next section adds another perspective by looking at a question that the scholarly literature on the radical right has perhaps often underestimated in relation to trust: trust in others.

9.5 About trusting others: interpersonal trust and the radical right vote

Modern democratic societies today depend very much on the well functioning of interpersonal social relations, which affect different levels of the private and public life and engagement of individuals. Social trust has thus become an essential ingredient that helps explain when well-founded modern democracies work best. Contemporary societies rely heavily on the fact that when individuals meet each other, the feelings of mutual trust and the wish to work together prevail. This has opened up the concept of social trust to different interpretations and approaches.

In the social capital literature, social trust plays a crucial role and is considered the glue of a more cooperative and more engaged community life (e.g. Putnam 2000). At the individual level, social trust is considered an important resource influencing the individual's social and political tolerance and more generally the trust in politicians and institutions. Early social-psychological works (e.g. Allport 1961) considered social trust to tap into aspects of the core personality of the individuals and thus starting already with the individual's experiences in the formative years of early childhood. More recent approaches maintain that social trust can be influenced in different ways and by different circumstances of the individual's social and political life.

The importance of having an indicator measuring the level of generalized social trust was emphasized as early as the late 1950s and early 1960s. The classical work ‘The Civic Culture’ by Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba (Almond and Verba 1965) introduced a question, whose aim was to evaluate the level of social trust in five different societies: “Generally speaking would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful (careful enough) in dealing with other people?” This rather simple question was then later adopted in most international and national social surveys, allowing a comparison of the levels of social trust within and among different countries and across the years.

The purpose is here to look at the relationship between social trust and radical right vote. It is interesting is first of all to see how much the supporters of the radical right parties trust others and whether the levels of social trust have changed in relation to the three parties’ life course and development. Furthermore, the purpose is also to look at the role played by social trust in relation to the radical right vote when taking into account the voters’ attitudes towards immigration. Even if it will be difficult to come across all the interesting implications that emerge from considering social trust in the analysis of the radical right vote, mainly due to space limitations, this section will hopefully shed light on some aspects of the individuals’ attitudes and behaviour that until recently have received very little attention in radical right studies (for exceptions, see e.g. Rydgren 2009).

The differences in social trust in the whole population in the three countries are shown in Table 9.21.

Table 9.21 Social (interpersonal) trust. Percentages.

Country	1981	1990	1999	N
Austria	.	32	33	2257
Denmark	53	58	67	1506
Italy	27	35	33	1207

Sources: European Value Survey 1981; 1990; 1999.

Wordings:

“Generally would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can not be careful enough in dealing with people?”. Entries are percentages saying: “Most people can be trusted”. “Don’t know” answers are here excluded.

In the late 1980s and 1990s the Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland) had the highest percentages of social trust in Western Europe (see also Borre 2005: 135), whereas in Italy, people’s trust in others has always been low. Predictably, several seminal studies have pinpointed the specificity of the Italian civic culture, suggesting different interpretations of the Italians’ wariness when it comes to interpersonal trust (see e.g. Banfield 1958; Putnam 1993; Pasquino 2002).

The Austrian voters are also rather careful when they relate to other people. The 1999 European Value Survey (EVS) shows that only about 33 pct. of the Austrian voters answered that most people can be trusted, whereas 67 pct. found that one can never be careful enough. Similar figures emerge from the 1999 EVS for Italian voters, while Denmark is again the

most trustful of the three, when it comes to interpersonal trust (67 pct. of the voters say that most people can be trusted).

In Denmark social trust has since the 1980s followed an ever-increasing trend (e.g. Goul Andersen 2004; Borre 2005; Torpe and Lolle 2009). The percentage of respondents who answered that most people can be trusted was 15 pct. in 1990, 33 pct. in 1999, 45 pct. in 2001 and 52 pct. in 2001 and 2008. However, the level of trust in others has varied from party to party and across time, as shown in Table 9.22.

Table 9.22 DF and other main party voters by levels of social trust. PDI (trust in most – do not trust). Percentages.

Trust in people	SF	S	RV	V	K	DF ¹	All
1981	27	-10	19	6	3	-38	2
1990	42	7	33	33	14	-32	15
1999	48	31	71	33	34	-9	33
2001	73	42	91	44	50	11	45
2005	74	46	76	59	59	11	52
2007²	78	72	89	64	77	21	63
2008	68	44	79	57	67	18	52

Sources: European Value Survey 1981; 1990; 1999; 2008. Danish Election Surveys 2001; 2005; 2007.

Note: The question posed was the same in all surveys (see note table 9.21). There are though differences in sampling and weighting procedures among the surveys that it would be too long to describe here. However, the main goal was here the comparison between the FrP and the DF voters and between these and the other party voters.

¹ In 1981 and 1990 the figures are referred to the Progress Party.

² For 2007 only the election main survey was included and not the web panel.

The DPP voters clearly have the lowest levels of social trust among all main Danish party voters. It was the same case for the Progress Party in the 1980s and 1990s (cf. Table 9.22 for 1981 and 1990). This changed in 2001, when the party registered for the first time a positive balance (+11 pct.) between those who answered that most people can be trusted and those avowing that one can never be careful enough. However, the level of trust remained the lowest among the Danish People's Party voters. This suggests that the party life course has in this case not affected in any significant way the carefulness with which the Danish People's Party voters' meet other people.

While feelings of reciprocal trust clearly prevail over distrust when people meet each other in Denmark, widespread distrust and caution affects the relationships between people in Italy and this has increased over the years (see Table 9.23).

Table 9.23 LN and other main party voters' by levels of social trust. PDI (trust in most – do not trust). Percentages.

Trust in people	RC	Ulivo	UDC	FI	AN	LN	All
2001	-30	-39	-35	-52	-63	-46	-45
2006	-35	-41	-50	-62	-53	-46	-47
2008	-34	-43	-55	-70	.	-70	-55

Source: ITANES 2001-2008.

Whether left, centre or right wing, all voters in general have very little trust in other people. The Northern League voters are among those who are most careful when it comes to trusting others, but it was among the supporters of the two parties Alleanza Nazionale (AN) and Forza Italia (PdL in 2008) that we find the lowest levels of interpersonal trust in 2001 and 2006.

When we look at social interpersonal trust in relation to the different Austrian parties, the Austrian Freedom Party voters have lowest trust in other people (see Table 9.24). At the opposite side we find the Greens, whose high levels of trust in the other people contrast not only with the Austrian Freedom Party, but also with all other voters. This position emphasises once again the role of the Green party voters at the political counterpole to the FPÖ. It is increasingly these two parties that are placed at the two extreme poles as regards value politics, in the same way as in Denmark the Social Liberals (RV) are often found at the opposite side of the Danish People's Party.

Table 9.24 FPÖ and other main party voters' by levels of social trust. PDI (trust in most – do not trust). Percentages.

Trust in people	SPÖ	ÖVP	FPÖ	Grüne	LiF	All
1999	-38	-32	-55	+30	-12	-31
2002	+2	+14	-10	+34	+12	+8

Source: EVS 1999 and ESS 2002-03.

Both the Danish People's Party and the Austrian Freedom Party voters have low levels of social trust in comparison to other parties. However, in the case of the Danish People's Party we have observed an increase in the levels of interpersonal trust from 2001 and until the election in 2008. This suggests that the political influence and the responsibility achieved by this party since 2001 may indirectly have affected also the levels of political and social trust among its supporters. However, no clear evidence of this was found in the data.

In the Italian context, the Northern League is, compared to the other case studies, a less outstanding case on lack of social trust since low interpersonal trust is common to a major part of the Italian electorate.

From what observed above, the supporters of the three radical right parties can be described as rather bad social trusters. It would be interesting to examine what implications and effects this has on other aspects of radical right electoral behaviour, for example on attitudes towards immigration. There is still little knowledge about how low interpersonal trust can affect anti-immigration attitudes (see though Herreros and Criado 2009) and to what extent low trust is the result of specific individual socioeconomic characteristics, for example a spurious effect of low educational attainment.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ In a recent article, Rydgren (2009) finds that social isolation and civic engagement are of marginal value for explaining the vote for the radical right. However, the paper emphasises the role of social trust, suggesting that "trust should be conceived more broadly and that trust in fellow citizens also plays a potentially important role for people's voting behaviour" (Rydgren 2009: 141).

The multivariate logistic regression of Table 9.25 attempts takes a closer look at the role played by social trust in relation to the radical right support. The analysis starts with a previously introduced model (cf. Model II Chapter 8 Table 8.9), showing the effect of some main socioeconomic background variables on the vote for the Danish Peoples Party.

Table 9.25 Effect of different main socioeconomic background and issue variables on the vote for the DF (2005). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Male	0.24	0.28*	0.32*	0.27
Cohort (before 1945)	-0.20	-0.15	-0.19	-0.51*
Manual worker	0.05	0.12	0.10	0.01
Self-employed	-1.08*	-0.94*	-0.93*	-1.03*
Public salariat	-0.91*	-0.75*	-0.74*	-0.73*
Private salariat	-0.60*	-0.47	-0.45	-0.60*
Higher education	-1.08*	-0.93*	-0.94*	-0.25
Social trust		-0.43*	-0.42*	-0.20*
Political trust			-0.11	
Immigration a cultural threat				1.01*
Muslim countries a threat				0.50*
Constant	-1.44	-1.43	-1.42	-2.06
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.08	0.11	0.11	0.26

Source: Danish Election Survey 2005.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

Social trust is here included in Model III as a new independent variable. The indicator of interpersonal trust is the standard survey question: “Generally speaking would you say most people can be trusted, or do you think that one cannot be too careful in dealing with other people?”, which was given the values -1 (“one can not be careful enough”) and +1 (“most people can be trusted”) (with “don’t know” as neutral position). The coefficient related to social trust is significant and in the expected direction; this means that voters with low levels of social trust show a higher propensity to vote for the Danish People’s Party. It is also interesting that the effect of social trust does not disappear with high education; both variables have a highly significant negative effect on the Danish People’s Party vote. This would suggest that social trust, or in this case the lack of it, is not just a spurious effect of educational attainment, even if the explained variance is not so much higher.

Controlling for the effect of political trust, the result shows a negative coefficient in relation to the reference variable indicating that in general political leaders make the right decisions for the country; however this is rather small and not statistically significant, contrary to social trust and education. Most noticeably, the effect of social trust on the vote for the Danish People’s Party remains significant when the two variables related to immigration are included in the model (Model V), whereas the educational variable is no longer significant. This suggests that social trust has a direct intervening effect between party vote and anti-immigration issues that could be very interesting to further investigate.

The effect of social trust on the vote for the Northern League is also interesting (Table 9.26). In Model III, the coefficient of interpersonal trust is negative and statistically significant, contrary to education. However, the effect of this variable is reduced and no longer significant as soon as we introduce the independent variables dealing with attitudes towards immigration.

The variable of political trust is here constructed on the basis of the two questions asking about trust in parliament and in political parties because the survey lacked more suitable questions. As expected, the coefficient of political trust is negative, but contrary to social trust it is not statistically significant.

Table 9.26 Effect of different main socioeconomic background and issue variables on the vote for the LN (2008). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Male	-0.11	-0.06	-0.06	0.17
Cohort (before 1945)	-0.21	-0.19	-0.15	-0.34
Manual worker	0.32	0.32	0.33	0.13
Self-employed	0.58*	0.58*	0.59*	0.41
High skilled white collar	0.10	0.11	0.13	0.05
Low skilled white collar	0.75*	0.77*	0.79*	0.79*
Higher education	-0.34	-0.30	-0.27	-0.05
Social trust		-0.29*	-0.27*	-0.16
Political trust			-0.17	
Immigration a cultural threat				0.27*
No allowance to build mosques				0.72*
Constant	-2.30	-2.52	-2.61	-2.89
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.11

Source: ITANES 2008.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

Unlike the other two, social trust does not have a significant effect on vote in the case of the Austrian Freedom Party (see Table 9.27). Instead social class still has the strongest effect on party vote. The results show that manual workers and clerks exhibit a high propensity to support the FPÖ, while highly skilled white collars (managers, directors, professionals) have the lowest propensity to vote for the party in relation to the reference group here represented by people outside the labour market.

As regards political trust, the variable (cf. Model IV Table 9.27), asking if voters think politicians in general care about what people think, has a negative, but very little and statistically not significant coefficient. When all variables are included, the attitude towards immigration seen as a cultural threat has the strongest effect on the FPÖ vote.

Table 9.27 Effect of different main socioeconomic background and issue variables on the vote for the FPÖ (2002-03). Logistic regression analyses (beta coefficients).

Independent variables	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Male	0.51	0.50	0.51	0.39
Cohort (before 1945)	0.71	0.72	0.72	0.55
Manual worker	1.18*	1.20*	1.18*	0.99*
Self-employed	0.56	0.59	0.58	0.55
Low skilled white collar	0.95*	0.98*	0.97*	1.01*
High skilled white collar	-1.08	-1.02	-1.01	-0.93
Service worker	0.18	0.56	0.56	0.43
Higher education	0.18	0.23	0.23	0.34
Social trust		-0.27	-0.27	-0.18
Political trust			-0.04	
Immigration a cultural threat				0.80*
Constant	-3.61	-3.65	-3.36	-3.50
R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.14

Source: ESS 2002-03.

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

The findings of this paragraph support the hypothesis that low levels of interpersonal trust can have an effect on the vote to the radical right parties, but also that there can be cross-national variations in significant this variable is when controlling for socioeconomic background variables and anti-immigration attitudes. Low interpersonal trust has a significant effect on the vote for the Danish People's Party and for the Northern League also after controlling for educational attainment, whereas it does not have a significant effect on the vote for the Austrian Freedom Party, for which the socioeconomic variables (occupation) continue to have a stronger effect on the vote. However, the present analysis suggests and encourages further research in relation to the effect of social trust in general on the vote for the radical right, perhaps by trying alternative patterns in the way this variable is operationalised and understood.

9.6 A note on euroscepticism and foreign policy issues

Questions of foreign politics and international affairs were initially not considered as a main political concern on the agenda of the radical right parties (cf. Schori Liang 2007), in particular when these were parties were still marginal actors in the respective national party systems.

The political efforts of the radical right were considered to focus primarily on national politics and national interests and therefore much less interested and engaged in aspects of foreign policy, such as international alliances, security issues and border controversies in other parts of the world. Moreover, the electorate of the radical right has perhaps also been considered more inclined to look within the national border and not to be especially interested in what is going on outside. In short, voters of radical right parties are considered to be more inward-looking and isolationist compared to other party voters, perhaps because of the emphasis on the commitment to the nation and national interests. Without exaggerating this reading, it can in fact be observed that the supporters of the radical right are less in favour than

other voters of an increasingly international society that wants to put less weight on national borders and peoples. It is for example what Table 9.28 suggests in relation to the Danish People's Party.

Table 9.28 Attitudes towards the internationalisation of society among DF and other main party voters. PDI (% strongly agree/agree – % strongly disagree/disagree).

	2007			PDI 2007	PDI 2005
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Leftwing	58	24	18	40	41
S	44	29	27	17	39
Centre parties	62	24	14	48	62
V+K	53	27	20	33	46
DF	32	20	48	-16	-18
All	49	26	25	24	37

Source: Danish Election Survey 2005-2007.

Wordings:

- We have to aim for a society which is more internationally oriented and puts less emphasis on the borders between countries and between people (strongly agree/agree; strongly disagree/disagree).

The DPP voters tend to prefer a society in which national borders and nationalities maintain their relevant function, although 32 pct. in 2007 favoured a more internationally oriented society (29 pct. in 2005). However, the percentage of Social Democratic voters who are internationally oriented is also lower than voters for other parties, and the most openminded are the supporters of the centre parties and in particular of the Social Liberals (RV). This distribution suggests an effect of the educational composition of the parties' electorate, which is likely to affect how voters look at this issue.

The position of these parties and of their voters on European integration and politics might – among other things – have also to do with the way voters relate to a political and economic institution that is considered to challenge the importance of national borders and to water out the differences between countries and between people.

Euro scepticism is today considered one of the relevant issues characterising the attitudes of the radical right supporters in relation to European integration and political role. Most of the radical right parties have through the years developed negative views about European integration, although showing different degrees of scepticism (cf. Szczerbiak and Taggart 2004; Mudde 2007; see also Chapters 5, 6, 7). Some of the central issues discussed by the radical right include: the EU considered a threat to national sovereignty and national identity, the centralisation and bureaucratization of the EU, the immigration regime supported by the EU, the problems related to the EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007, and lately also the plan to include Turkey as a member country.

The parties' discontent with EU and EU politics thus involves different levels, which are often difficult to pinpoint by means of the variables about EU available in most national and international surveys. Previous studies have shown that the position on European politics has very little effect on the support to radical right parties. (cf. van der Brug, Fennema 2003;

2008). However, even if this issue does not – or perhaps not yet – exert the strongest appeal on the radical right electorate, there are signs that in some countries where EU attitudes have been more strongly politicised over the years, for example in Denmark, Euroscepticism has become a better predictor of support (in this case) to the Danish People’s Party (see van der Brug, Fennema 2008). It is therefore interesting how the attitudes of DF supporters towards EU have developed over time and in relation to the other main Danish parties. In the following, some of the attitudes towards EU will be taken up in relation to the Danish case.

Until the 1980s and early 1990s, most radical right parties were actually almost enthusiastic supporters of the process of European integration, as we saw with the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party (cf. Chapters 6 and 7). The Danish People’s Party was already from beginning in 1995 against further EU integration. Also after the influence achieved in 2001, the party has maintained this standpoint (cf. Chapter 5). In a government in which the Liberals are clearly in the lead in their support for EU, followed closely by the Conservatives, the Danish People’s Party’s position against more EU has thus been directly in contrast with the pro-European line followed by the government parties and in general by the Danish population.¹⁰⁷ This has at times created some conflicts in relation to EU politics between the government parties and their influential supporting partner.¹⁰⁸ One could argue that since the Danish People’s Party is not directly involved in government, the party has had more political freedom on this issue.

Table 9.29 shows the main attitude towards EU among the different Danish party voters.

Table 9.29 General opinion about the role of EU among DF and other main Danish party voters. Percentages and PDI (very/quite positive – very/quite negative).

General opinion about EU	2007			PDI 2007	PDI 2005	PDI 2001	PDI 1998
	Very/quite positive	Neutral	Very/quite negative				
Leftwing¹	35	34	31	4	-7	-26	-48
S	51	30	19	32	21	19	18
Centre parties²	60	22	18	42	49	42	39
V+K	71	20	9	62	58	55	65
DF	26	38	36	-10	-26	-13	-36
All	53	27	20	33	30	26	24

Source: Danish Electoral Survey (1998-2007).

¹ Leftwing: SF (Socialist People’s Party) + Enh (Unity List).

² Centre parties, for 2007: RV (Social Left) + KD (Christian Democrats, former Christian People’s Party; KrF) + NA (New Alliance; formed in 2007, now Liberal Alliance). Other elections: RV+KD+CD (Centrum Democrats).

¹⁰⁷ The Eurobarometer standard survey of spring 2009 showed that up to 65 pct. of the Danes consider the EU membership as a “good thing”, compared to 53 pct. in the EU27. The percentage of people considering EU a “good thing” was in Austria and in Italy only 48 pct. (see Eurobarometer analysis Spring 2009).

¹⁰⁸ One of the most discussed issues in summer 2008 was the EU sentence declaring illegal the Danish rules on family reunion related to the Danish immigration law approved by the government together with the DPP in 2002. The European Court asserted that a European citizens living in one of the member countries is allowed to take his/her spouse to Denmark, even if this would not be possible according to the Danish law. The verdict was strongly criticized by the Danish People’s Party, which considered this a clear indication of European interference in national politics. See Dansk Folkeblad, September 2008, (12)4.

As shown in the table, the DPP voters have maintained a negative opinion about EU, showing a pattern with no clear indications of less negative positions. But the Danish People's Party was not always the only eurosceptical political party in Danish politics. Particularly in the past, Euroscepticism characterised the supporters of the left-wing parties and especially the two parties Unity List (Enh) and the Socialist People's Party (SF), but to some extent also some Social Democratic voters. Denmark was also the country that until the 2009 European elections counted two Eurosceptical political movements only represented in the European Parliament. The situation has partly changed in recent years, in line with the more pro-European direction that characterises the politics of SF towards Europe and with the electoral decline experienced by the Unity List at the Danish parliamentary election of 2007. This implies that the Danish People's Party is at present the most clearly Eurosceptical party in Danish politics, which can contribute to positively differentiate the party among voters who for different reasons have negative or sceptical attitudes towards the EU.

In the perspective above, Taggart's thesis (cf. Taggart 1998) that Euroscepticism helps parties to differentiate themselves when they are at the periphery of the party system, could actually be effective in this sense also when the radical right has become mainstream. The example of the other two parties, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party suggests a similar pattern.

Austria joined the EU in 1994, together with Sweden and Finland. Joining to the other EU countries was the consequence of important transformations that at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s had radically changed the geopolitical position of Austria (cf. Pelinka 2004). Until then, the country had played almost the role of barrier in the East-West conflict that already emerged during the postwar period. With the approval of the State Treaty in 1955, the Austrian state had become neutral. This gave rise to Eurosceptical positions from those who considered EU membership incompatible with the country's principles of neutrality. Becoming a full member of the EU was considered to imply a militarization of the country, for example by also accepting NATO membership. This position explains why the EU scepticism initially came from parties such as the SPÖ and from the Greens. In the 1990s, both governing parties, the SPÖ and ÖVP, became increasingly positive towards an application for EU membership, whereas the sceptics were found at the ends of the political spectrum. Rather than a left-right divide it was then more correct to speak about a centre-periphery divide on EU, with the Greens and the FPÖ leading the Eurosceptics. Both parties were against Austrian membership, but for opposite reasons. The Greens were mainly worried about Austria's neutrality and about EU's role in the globalisation process. The FPÖ was against EU for questions related to the country's sovereignty and to the mass-elite relationship (see Pelinka 2004).

The Greens have since shifted to a positive attitude towards EU, reflecting the more positive attitudes towards EU among the Austrian population as a whole. Therefore, the FPÖ

has remained the most outspoken critical opponent of EU integration and of the consequences of the European enlargement.

Also the Northern League was until the mid-1990s one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the European integration process. This does not surprise, considering that Italy has always had high support for EU. Particularly in the years when the Northern League campaigned for the separation of Northern Italy from the South, Europe was considered an economic opportunity for the North over the centralized state in Rome, or as the party put it in those years: 'closer to Brussels and further from Rome'. In the late 1990s the party changed its position radically and began to express considerable scepticism about EU integration politics. After its entrance in office in 2001 the party has toned down, trying to find a balance between the party's Euroscepticism and the political responsibilities of a party in office together with a pro-EU government coalition. To the present European integration the Northern League suggests a Europe of the peoples, where the different national states and identities are respected, protected and valued.

Conclusions

The analysis of the electoral profile and attitudes of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austria Freedom Party helped to highlight some characteristics of their development over time and some of the similarities and differences that distinguish them.

One of the important aspects emerged is that the three parties are quite different in terms of the voters' positioning on the economic dimension. In this respect, the Danish People's Party electorate has shown to be much more welfare oriented, for example pro public spending, when money is spent in the health care sector and in general to improve the economic and living conditions of the elderly and the sick. In line with the ideological development of the Danish People's Party on the economic dimension (see here Chapter 5), the Danish People's Party electorate has become more and more pro welfare state, but the welfare solidarity drops markedly when the economic and social support goes to help immigrants and refugees in the country. However, the political placement of the DPP voters in relation to welfare issues, but also in relation to the levelling of income differences and government intervention in economy, is at the centre-left of party politics rather than right-wing liberal positions. This matches the socioeconomic profile of the party supporters; the Danish People's Party has from its early years gained increasing support among manual workers. This happened at the same time as the left-wing parties and particularly the Social Democrats were losing support from the working class. The working class political dealignment started already in the late 1970s and the Danish Progress Party was among the first beneficiaries, but the party seemed unable to fully exploit this situation. The task was successful for the Danish People's Party, which is today the most clear-cut working class party in Danish politics.

The pro-welfare pattern developed by the Danish People's Party suggests also that this kind of politics has a better return when the manual workers are overrepresented in the radical

right electoral composition. We have found a similar electoral composition characterising the Austrian Freedom Party in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Being a manual worker has a significant effect on support for the FPÖ. However, based on the analysis of the data and the period considered, the voters of the Austrian Freedom Party have a more neoliberal approach to economic issues. The FPÖ voters favour privatization and liberalization of the market, believing that the government must not get too much control over private firms and private initiative. Compared to the Danish People's Party, the FPÖ seemed, at least until the beginning of 2000, still anchored to the neoliberal and anti-establishment tradition that had characterised the party in the 1990s. The FPÖ's recent ideological development indicates a shift towards a social and pro-welfare profile (cf. here Chapter 7), however. Today, the FPÖ supports the 'welfare state Austria' as an important foundation for the country's economic and social stability, particularly in periods of crisis. Also in this case, the pro-welfare politics are framed into a selective notion of welfare state, strictly limited to Austrian citizens and with very few rights for immigrants and refugees.

The electorate of the Northern League is still neoliberal and against taxes. In this respect the party has not changed so much from the positions developed in the 1990s, when anti-establishment and anti-tax politics were at the core of the economic agenda of the LN. The party is in general against an increase in public spending and taxes, which according to the party discourage the private initiative. We have seen that the position of the Northern League on economics represents the party profile. Compared to the other two parties, the Northern League has a more varied electoral composition. As observed above, the party is still well represented among the self-employed and among the private salariat in general. In this respect, the Northern League cannot be called a clear-cut working class party, unlike the Danish People's Party. This can be read together with the fact that the effect of education is particularly significant in the Danish case, but it seems to be less important in relation to the vote for the other two radical right parties.

Among the other variables tested, interpersonal trust has also shown to have an interesting effect on the vote for the radical right parties. It emerged that people with low levels of social trust have a higher propensity (than people with high social trust) to vote for the Danish People's Party and for the Northern League in particular, while the effect of this variable in the case of the Austrian Freedom Party was much less evident. Actually, social trust has proven to be a variable with a more significant effect on the radical right vote than political trust. This encourages further investigations about the character and implications of general trust in others in relation to the radical right vote.

To sum up, the three parties still differ on the (old) economic dimension, whereas a high degree of similarity has been achieved on the (new) value dimension and particularly the voters' attitudes on immigration and related issues. The analysis has also confirmed the finding in previous studies that anti-immigration attitudes have the strongest effect on the radical right vote. More explicitly, anti-immigration attitudes have in recent years become increasingly

synonymous with a perceived threat against national identity and culture. Thus, it is not so much the presence of immigrants on the labour market that is considered threatening, but rather the presence of immigrants in society with different principles, values, religious beliefs and cultural norms. These attitudes have certainly made the western European radical right parties more similar in the course of the past decades

Things are different on the economic dimension, which still depends on country specific opportunities, structural conditions and on the party electoral composition. However, this does not mean that this dimension has become irrelevant in relation to the support and development of the radical right parties. As observed in this chapter, it is in particular with the achievement of government responsibility that it becomes important for a party to show clear lines on national wealth, taxes, welfare and economic redistribution. It is in the later stages of party development that the radical right has to prove to be a complete and wide ranging political organization and not a single issue party.

10. CONCLUSIONS

Over the past decades, the consequences and impact of the crisis of modernisation and following globalisation have been among the most studied and discussed topics in social and political research. The scholarly interest has mainly focused on the macrostructural plan, considering the effects on global economy, on the nation state and on the effects in terms of cultural and value change and new configurations of the political system (e.g. Bell 1973; Giddens 1990; Bauman 1998; Held et al. 1999; Kriesi et al. 2008). Much less attention has been given to the analysis of the direct and lasting effects on politics, party ideology and on the electoral behaviour. The radical right is an example of this. The rise and further development of the radical right parties continue in much of the existing literature to be framed in an understanding of 'extremeness' and 'exceptionalism' (e.g. Hainsworth 2000; Merkl and Weinberg 1997; Eatwell and Mudde 2004; Carter 2005; Mayer 2005). This, despite the fact that several radical right parties in Western Europe in the last decade have achieved political influence and in more than one case also government responsibility. Even so, the 'most natural' place of the radical right continues to be considered at the margins of the political system. Different approaches have contributed to this understanding, for example by drawing attention primarily to the importance of specific domestic factors and political opportunities. Rising levels of political distrust, anti-establishment feelings and voter populist protest have also been mentioned as main reasons behind the rise and the support for the radical right (cf. Mény and Surel 2000; Taggart 2000; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008).

Other approaches have explained the support for the radical right parties as a major reaction to the structural changes introduced by the globalisation process (cf. Betz 1994). The effects on society and politics are still a point of controversy and debate in political science and sociology, but the rapid and far-reaching transformations of contemporary societies are considered to have created different types of winners and losers (cf. Kriesi et al. 2008), whose 'gains and losses' can be evaluated in economic and social terms. In this perspective, support to the radical right is understood as the reaction of the so called 'modernisation losers', the most directly exposed to the risks of marginalisation on the labour market and in society. But even more generally, post-industrialisation processes and the increasing mobility of both capital and labour spread growing concerns among those segments of society which had previously enjoyed more sheltered conditions. Uncertainty about the economic situation and the future prompted what some studies have interpreted as irrational reactions to the situation, that found a political answer in the way the radical right parties deal with immigration, global economy, national interests and European integration.

What the marginalisation and the protest hypotheses have in common is therefore to understand the radical right largely in terms of a reaction against what the future might bring or against a condition of existing marginalisation (e.g. unemployment). As a consequence, the support and success of the radical right is considered in electoral terms highly dependent on the socioeconomic background of the voters (cf. Lubbers and Scheepers 2002) and in ideo-

logical terms strongly influenced by a limited number of issues and the way these are addressed by the political parties. This hypothesis has never really found strong evidence in the empirical research (cf. Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 2002; Goul Andersen 2004; Ivarsflaten 2005; Flecker 2007; Ivarsflaten 2008(b)). Even so it was important to include it, as it addresses specific socioeconomic aspects of the radical right electorate and ideology and refers to dynamics that may surface, for instance in periods of economic crisis.

Another hypothesis in this study refers to the emergence and consolidation of new political cleavages. This approach focuses on conflicting attitudes and value positions, considering the radical right as the result of the now deeply rooted oppositions between authoritarian versus libertarian values and materialist versus post-materialist positions (cf. Kitschelt 1995; Goul Andersen 2004). Briefly, this kind of approach emphasises the relationship/contrast between authoritarian and libertarian attitudes, values and interests and their impact on vote, rather than the direct effects of social class as such. Working class support for the radical right is in this sense interpreted within the framework of change and declining class consciousness, followed by a political realignment answering to other logics than those strictly related to economic (class) interests. Also in this case the radical right is presented as the political product of a reaction, although this time having deeper value and cultural implications.

The present comparative analysis of the ideology and electorate of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party referred at the start to the above mentioned explanations of the radical right support and to the implications that these hypotheses have on the ideological and electoral development of the three parties. However, it soon became clear that these hypotheses had a major limit. Referring to the radical right mainly as a reaction against specific conditions has in fact pinned this political and electoral phenomenon into narrow interpretations of causal effects that work best to account for the phase of the radical right breakthrough and success, rather than to later or intermediate phases of their evolution and development (see Chapter 1). Indeed, to understand the development of the radical right today and the reasons behind the voters' support in a national, but particularly cross-national context it is necessary to start updating the approach to these parties by using the same tools that are applied for the analysis of all the other 'normal' political parties. In the course of the years, but particularly in the last decade, several radical right parties have proved able to survive, consolidate, adapt to new situations and tackle political influence and government responsibility (cf. Williams 2006). Several of them, among others the three case studies here considered, have shown that they represent a part of the electorate, whose political positions and attitudes are more solidly rooted to be 'exclusively' the result of protest or the mounting reaction against marginalisation. As a result of these observations, part of the effort of the present study was to look at the ideological and electoral development of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party over a life-span perspective (see Chapter 4). It has emerged that the ideology of these parties and the profile

and attitudes of their supporters have changed, transformed and adjusted across the years and in relation to what has been identified as the main phases of a party life course.

Phases of political development and patterns of ideological change

An approach to tracking down the ideological and electoral development of the three case studies was to consider their historical, ideological and electoral development by referring to a lifespan approach. The three case studies fit this approach well, since they have all gone through some of the main phases of party development indicated as: 1) a breakthrough and formative phase; 2) a consolidation and maturity phase; and 3) a phase of government responsibility and political influence (cf. Pedersen 1988).

The empirical analysis of party ideology (Chapters 5, 6, 7) therefore highlighted how the different phases of development have influenced the ideological and electoral development of the three parties, also in relation to the different opportunity structures and the national political history. The analysis of party ideology thus spanned three chapters, each dealing with a single party, since it would have been too complex to bring the three cases together without having to omit important observations on the national conditions, opportunities and contexts that saw the emergence and development of the three parties.

In general terms, the analysis of party ideology has shown that during phases when the radical right party is still at the margins, the ideology of the party tends to radicalise. The fact that from this position the party does not have to tackle the responsibilities and duties that come with the achievement of political influence and government incumbency, gives a higher degree of freedom in terms of what a party can say and promise to the electorate. It is in these phases that the radical right parties adopt more radical positions for example on immigration, European integration and other issues. From this position, it is also easier for a radical right party to promote a profile of alternative to the political establishment. At the same time, it is at this stage that the radical right parties are more subject to the politics of containment triggered by the political establishment and to forms of policy co-optation intended to keep these parties away from political influence.

To avoid electoral volatility and marginalisation, the next phase of the radical right party development is to consolidate the electoral support. For radical right parties this requires, as a minimum, an internal reorganisation based on a strong centralisation of the party leadership, followed by the dismissal of the most extreme and non-aligned members. A more solid ideological, programmatic and also organisational reliability are also important requisites for a radical right party entering the phase of party consolidation (cf. Seliger 1970).

Achievement of political influence and in some cases of government responsibility can thus have a different impact on the radical right parties. In the cases observed here, things seem to become more difficult when a party achieves direct government responsibility. The FPÖ paid a high price of ‘respectability’ when it was in government from 2000 to 2005 (cf. also Heinisch 2003). From the start, the party was tied up to the declarations of intents made

by the government in front of Europe and constrained by the strong political role played by the ÖVP. When it returned to opposition and the margins of Austrian politics, the FPÖ radicalised its positions, recovering part of the electoral support that it had lost in 2002. In the case of the Austrian Freedom Party and for the Italian Northern League it has been observed that at different periods in time, the achievement of government responsibility was followed by a new radical phase of the party politics and ideology and by vote-seeking strategies, rather than office-seeking strategies.

In respect to the lifespan history of the three parties, the present analysis has also underlined the comparatively more advantageous position that the Danish People's Party obtained at the 2001 election. The party has not joined the governing coalition, but works as a supporting partner to the Liberal and Conservative parties at government. This has given the Danish People's Party a higher degree of political and decisional autonomy in relation to the politics of the government. At the same time the party has used its position to obtain concrete political results, well aware of the power of its votes and importance of its support for the present government. This has on more than one occasion given better pay-offs than being in office.

For the radical right, getting too close to power also implies the risk that it can become difficult to see the difference between their own and the other parties' ideas and programmes. This was for example the problem of the Northern League at government at the beginning, but the party has struggled and to some extent managed to distinguish itself from the other parties of the right-wing coalition (cf. Albertazzi & McDonnell 2005). In different ways, both the Italian and the Danish party have advanced demands on the economic dimension that helped them to distinguish themselves from the main political course followed by the government. For the Danish People's Party it was pro-welfare issues and for the Northern League the fiscal federalist reform of the state. This introduces another position underlined in this study, that to explain the radical right it is necessary to consider both the value and cultural dimension and the economic dimension. The position on economics must not be underestimated when considering the outcomes of the radical right.

The radical right ideology: anti-immigration an important issues, but not the only one.

Anti-immigration is considered the main and often the only ideological issue of relevance of the radical right (van der Brug and Fennema 2005; Mudde 2007; Ivarsflaten 2008(b); 2008(c);). This study endorses that anti-immigration is an important ideological issue and ensures the radical right parties the support of a part of the electorate. In relation to this issue, an increasing ideological convergence has been observed between the parties; immigration is increasingly considered in terms of a cultural threat and a threat against national security.

It was also observed that anti-immigration is a question that the radical right has continued to develop and elaborate, recently also by including perspectives and readings that generally are not considered to belong to the 'world' of right-wing radicalism; positions such as freedom of speech, gender equality among ethnic minorities, social solidarity and tolerance

have been taken up in particular by the Danish People's Party in the discussions about the problems of integration and the impact of immigration on the Western society. Making use of libertarian positions that are turned inwards and often appeal to feelings of risk and insecurity has been interpreted in this study as a new stage of radical right ideological development, attempting to create an approach to this issue that is more appropriate to the influential position achieved by these parties and which looked for broad respectability both nationally and internationally.

On other dimensions than immigration, the position of the radical right parties has often been explained as the programmatic result of opportunistic and instrumental choices (cf. Mudde 2007: 119-135), or strategically formulated to appeal to broader segments of the electorate (cf. Kitschelt 1995). This study has advanced a different position, maintaining that an important step in the ideological development of the radical right has taken place when these parties have been able to formulate concrete and convincing economic programmes that appealed and convinced a part of the potential electorate. The survival of the fittest is not restricted to a single issue, but requires a more solid political platform. A case in point is the Danish People's Party's pro-welfare orientation that was adopted when the party was launched in 1995 and which has become an important feature for its political identity. It is a pro-welfare position characterised by chauvinism that privileges traditional areas of welfare spending and considers immigrants mainly as undeserving and often exploiting recipients of social benefits and services. The declared and sometimes declaimed pro-welfare position of the Danish People's Party has helped to ensure the support of a large segment of the working class. Quite significantly, the Danish People's Party is today the most clear-cut working class political formation in Danish politics which, it could be argued, gives this party a basis to claim that it is the real heir of the traditional social democratic values.

In Italy, the federalist vocation of the Northern League responded to the neoliberal demands from the electoral strongholds in the North of the country. The party has not followed the same line as the Danish People's Party in relation to the economic positions, but continues to be a party with a liberal agenda when it comes to public intervention and welfare.

Not so for the Austrian Freedom Party, whose neoliberal position was already in the late 1990s in contrast with the party's strong support in the Austrian working class. In this perspective, the recent developments of the FPÖ seem to go in the same direction of a social and more pro-welfare profile that bears more than a similarity with what happened to the Danish People's Party in the 1990s.

Similar positions between the parties have emerged in relation to foreign policy issues. Predictably, it is particularly on European politics and integration that the parties have developed similar agendas. The Euroscepticism of the radical right has then in recent years been additionally fuelled by the proposal to include Turkey in the European Union.

What the analysis of party ideology here suggests is therefore that even if differences in the ideological positions of the three parties still exist, we have witnessed a development over

the past decade that has brought them closer, particularly on the value and cultural dimension of politics.

The electorate of the radical right: profile and attitudes.

The analysis of the radical right 'demand side' is carried out in Chapter 8 and 9. Looking at the voters' socioeconomic profile and attitudes in relation to the radical right (Chapter 8) has contributed to highlight some of the main similarities and differences in relation to gender, cohort, educational levels and social class of the electorate supporting these parties and the effects that the socioeconomic variables have on the vote for the three parties.

We have for example seen that the Danish People's Party has large support among the manual workers and among voters with medium/lower education. There is very little support from public salarieds, but comparatively also from self-employed and private salarieds, indicating that this party can hardly fit into explanations of populist protest from the middle class. We find a similar social profile for the Austrian Freedom Party, though not yet as clearly defined as for the Danish People's Party. No wonder then, if explanations with weight on the consequences of globalisation and on marginalisation processes have been suggested in relation to the radical right. However, the political attitudes and issue positioning of the radical right electorate do not provide strong empirical evidence that the supporters of these parties feel particularly marginalised and concerned about their present and future economic situation.

The case of the Northern League is a little different. Its electorate reveals the transversal and to some extent particular position of the Northern League in the Italian political system; electorally and politically entrenched geographically and still well represented among the self-employed and among the private salarieds in general, but at present getting increasing support also among the working class, the Northern League tries to mediate and to talk to all its different 'souls'.

However, we have to look within the field of issue voting to find more comprehensive explanations for the radical right vote and about the transformations that might have characterised the issue positioning of the radical right electorate across the years. The attitudes of the voters supporting the three radical right parties are dealt with in Chapter 9. The empirical analysis has shown that the importance of the voters' socioeconomic background diminished as soon as attitudinal variables were taken into account. Individual attitudes are therefore often strong factors to explain the support for the radical right that lay in-between the socioeconomic background variables and the choice of what party to vote for. The strongest effect on the radical right vote is undoubtedly represented by anti immigration. For all three cases the strongest effect on the radical right vote comes from those voters who perceive immigration as a threat against culture and identity, whereas little evidence was found in support of interpretations indicating the radical right as primarily housing voters who are economically marginalised in society. If there is some concern about the fact that immigrants come and take

'our' jobs, or contribute to lower average wages, it is limited, compared to the opinion that immigration constitutes a cultural and identity threat to the Western contemporary societies. Radical right voters may be worried about their present and future economic situation, comparatively also more than other voters, but actually not enough to say that their concerns are exaggerated.

In Chapter 9 we have also seen that compared to other voters, the radical right supporters are in general characterised by lower levels of trust. Particularly interpersonal trust rather than political trust played a role in relation to the radical right vote; especially in Denmark and Italy. Recently, other studies have underlined the need to take social trust more 'seriously' in studies of the radical right vote (e.g. van der Brug and Fennema 2007 and more recently Rydgren 2009). The implications of social trust can be differently interpreted, but it is clear that integration in society can only be more difficult if it starts from individuals that meet each other with feelings of distrust.

Finally, the life-cycle approach has drawn more attention to the influence that different phases of the party development might have had on support for the radical right parties and on their political behaviour, hopefully contributing to look at the radical right electorate from another angle than that influenced by the radical right parties' emergence and reasons of success. This perspective has also allowed us to consider the reciprocal influence exerted by the supply side on the demand side and viceversa.

At the electoral level, some improvement and a degree of policy dependent effect has been observed in relation to for example gender, suggesting that female voters are more likely to vote for the radical right parties when they become 'normalised', rather than in phases of radicalisation. Limited, but anyway a little less negative positions have also been registered in the latest developments of the Danish People's Party, for instance in relation to public spending and welfare rights to immigrants and refugees, very likely following the restrictive politics enacted since 2001. DPP voters seem to have a little more trust in decisions made by politicians and this could perhaps be interpreted as a result of the politics implemented under the Liberal and Conservative governments with the support of the Danish People's Party.

In the case of the Northern League, the years in government seem to have had an effect on the positions held by the supporters of the party. On many of the issues considered, the positions of the Northern League supporters were very close to Forza Italia and today to the recently founded People's Freedom Party (in which Alleanza Nazionale has joined Forza Italia). Besides the Northern League's secure electoral and political anchoring in the Italian North and the consequences in terms of electoral composition and behaviour, the most obvious difference between these parties remains in the approach to immigration. Not surprisingly, the two parties in government often disagree on this issue at present.

It was more difficult to see the recent developments in the composition and attitudes of the FPÖ supporters, as the data stopped chronologically when the party was in a phase of

electoral decline, on its way back to opposition and undergoing profound internal organisational changes. However, the empirical analysis of the ideology and electorate of the FPÖ suggests that the Austrian party shares more than a similarity with the Danish People's Party, starting with the strong appeal among the working class and with the emphasis also today on pro-welfare issues and policies.

At any rate, the life-cycle approach was also an attempt to introduce a perspective that needs to be followed up by radical right studies in the future, when the impact of the different life phases of the radical right party on the political behaviour and attitudes of its supporters will become even more obvious, particularly in a comparative perspective.

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ENGLISH ABSTRACT

The present study looks at the ideology and electorate of the Danish People's Party, the Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party in a comparative perspective and at their breakthrough, consolidation and achievement of political influence and government responsibility.

Despite the ample literature published on radical right-wing parties through the years, this field of research is still short of comparative analyses that can help explain how the radical right has become mainstream in some Western European countries and what similarities and differences characterise these parties in terms of ideology, electoral support and voters' attitudes.

The attention of this study has therefore turned away from the many assumptions and discussions about conceptual definitions that so often have characterised this field of research and which in more than one case have forgotten the real object of investigation: the radical right parties, their development over time and the similarities and differences characterising their ideology and electorate.

The present study therefore strives to combine the analysis of the 'supply-side' with that of the 'demand-side' and to frame these into a comparative approach. In short, this implies examining the role of the parties (the supply-side) via a careful analysis of first-hand sources like party programmes and party literature, whereas the demand-side, represented by the voters and their attitudes, has been dealt with by means of a rather comprehensive analysis of national and international survey data.

The period covered by the study refers primarily to the years from their breakthrough until their recent developments (2007-08), at least in the analysis of the party ideological development. The ambition was to broaden the time span to include all the phases of these parties' development, indicatively distinguished into their breakthrough, consolidation and achievement of political influence and eventually also government responsibilities. For the quantitative data, the research on the parties' electoral composition and behaviour starts from about the mid-1990s until the most recent parliamentary elections, respectively 2007 and 2008 in the case of the Danish People's Party and the Northern League and until 2002-03 for the Austrian Freedom Party.

Besides the effort of this study to address the analysis of the radical right by considering the interplay between ideology and electoral support and attitudes, the approach was also to understand the impact from the different phases of the parties' life cycle.

The dissertation consists of three parts: the first part (Chapter 1 to 4) deals with theory and method and with the operationalisation of the main dimensions that more concretely structure the analysis of the party ideology and electorate. More specifically, Chapter 1 introduces the three cases studies, their electoral results over time and the reasons for selecting these cases and ends with a critical assessment of the existing research and literature on the

radical right. Chapter 2 turns the attention to the exploration of three main theories or hypotheses explaining the rise and development of the radical right, respectively indicated as: the new cleavages thesis; the marginalisation and the protest thesis. This allows a preliminary mapping of some of the main dimensions that are considered to characterise the radical right ideology and electorate and to use this as a reference for the comparative empirical analysis in the later chapters. Chapter 3 goes deeper into this discussion, considering more concretely what issues are useful to examine in relation to the radical right ideology. This results in a list of main issues that creates a guideline to the following empirical analysis. Chapter 4, which concludes the theoretical and methodological part of the dissertation, finally considers the importance of the different phases of a party lifecycle on the development of ideology in particular. This is still a rather unexplored approach to the radical right party ideological development, as most of the efforts have concentrated on contextual factors such as opportunity structures at the national level, electoral systems and the like. Chapter 4 introduces also a comprehensive description of the sources used for the analysis of ideology for each case study. This was done for reasons of precision, but also to encourage and inform other analyses of radical right party ideology.

In the second part of the study (Chapters 5 to 7), the analysis turns to the empirical analysis of party ideology; a chapter for each of the three parties. The chapters start with a section on the parties' history, context setting and opportunities, whose scope is to pin down the different phases of political development. The chapters get then down to the analysis of party ideology, considering how a number of relevant issues have developed and transformed over time. The ideological elements analysed include welfare and neoliberal issues; anti-establishment politics; anti-immigration; foreign politics and EU relations; authoritarian and conformist views. The issues refer to the so called 'old' economic dimension of politics, as well as to the 'new' cultural and value dimension.

The findings of these chapters suggest a highly dynamic ideological development that on several occasions has taken advantage of the opportunities created by the specific political context and which was highly reactive to demands from the electorate. The different phases of the party lifetime clearly influenced the parties' ideological positions; for example, when a radical right party is at the margins, its ideology tends to radicalise. From this position the radical right party is free from the responsibilities and inter-party negotiations that come with achievement of political influence and government incumbency. From the margins it is also easier to emphasize and gain on anti-establishment positions, since there is no direct involvement with the political establishment and in the decision making process.

A higher degree of ideological, programmatic and also organisational reliability is required from the radical right party when entering the phase here defined as party consolidation.

Finally, achievement of political influence and in some cases also of government responsibility can have different impacts on the radical right parties. For example, the present

analysis underlines the more favourable position occupied by the Danish People's Party since 2001. Acting as a supporting partner to the Liberals and Conservatives in government allowed the Danish People's Party to continue distinguishing itself from the rest of the establishment and consequently keep a little more decisional autonomy than if the party were in office.

However, the radical right parties seem to have more difficulties when it comes to direct government responsibility. This indicates that bringing a radical right party in from the cold may display its ideological, programmatic and sometimes organisational weaknesses. In some cases, e.g. the Austrian Freedom Party and the Italian Northern League in different periods, this is followed by a new radicalisation of the party ideology and by a return to vote-seeking, rather than office-seeking strategies.

The parties' positions on economic matters also play a central role when the radical right becomes mainstream. Both the Danish People's Party and the Northern League have an economic programme that better matches the profile of their respective electorates and which partly distinguishes itself from the positions of the right wing governments in office. In this sense, the moderate but clearly pro-welfare position of the Danish People's Party and the (fiscal) federalist orientation of the Northern League, have affected the position of these parties and their participation in government decision making and activity.

A relevant observation from the chapters on party ideology is the increasing similarity characterising these parties in relation to anti-immigration. They have developed similar agendas particularly and most clearly on Islam and on the cultural and value impact on Western democracies. But the analysis of party ideology also reveals that anti-immigration has been an issue under constant development. Today the radical right anti-immigration politics refer increasingly to culture and values and not exclusively to welfare costs, national and international security matters and crime rates. The radical right can therefore also be heard championing questions that in the past were almost the 'domain' of left-wing parties. It is not at all uncommon today to hear leading profiles of these parties championing freedom of speech, women's rights issues, gender equality and social solidarity.

Other similarities have also emerged for example on EU and on foreign policy issues. Even so, it is still difficult to provide clear evidence for the existence of a process of cross-national learning that should have created the basis for an ideological 'master frame'. The patterns of this reciprocal influence are difficult if not impossible to map and it is more likely that the radical right parties have 'learned by doing' and by observing each other in more informal ways. Major differences among the parties still exist, for instance in relation to economic matters, although there are signs of rising similarities, indicating a development towards more social and pro-welfare positions, particularly for radical right parties with high electoral support from the working class. Some of the ideological differences can also be conditioned by the position occupied in the party system, or by specific conditions at the national level.

The third part of the dissertation (Chapters 8 and 9) examines the development of the socio-economic profile and attitudes of the three radical right parties' voters. The aim is to take a closer look at the similarities and differences that distinguish the parties and to determine whether they are indications of an increasing convergence between the parties' respective electorates. The findings suggest that parties that have developed an ideology that best reflects the profile of their electorate have a greater chance of maintaining or increasing the levels of electoral support. The Danish People's Party is a case in point. Being the most clear-cut working class party in Danish politics, opting for pro-welfare has strengthened the party's support and position. However, for the period here considered, there is still a clear difference between the more pro-welfare orientation of the Danish People's Party voters and the neoliberal positions supported by the electorate of the other two parties.

Anti-immigration attitudes and in particular the perception of immigration as a threat against the country's culture and identity clearly explain the vote for the radical right. However, these attitudes towards immigration and immigrants have to be read in connection with other important features, such as the generally low levels of educational achievement, low trust in the others and in the institutions, and the conformist and authoritarian dispositions that characterise the radical right electorate. In general, it is registered that political and policy influence and responsibilities have had an effect on the voters' trust in politics and in other people in general and to some extent also in relation to positions on, for example, public spending and immigration.

The purpose of this study is to look at the radical right parties from another angle, appraising their ideological and electoral development over time, in their respective contexts and in relation to each other, by taking into account main ideological dimensions and major issues. This perspective disclosed patterns of ideological convergence and differences on the value and cultural dimension and on the economic dimension of politics. Most significantly, it has clearly emerged from this study that interpretations referring exclusively to bottom-up and macrostructural explanations are not enough to fully disclose the radical right development and transformations. Indeed, to understand what conflicts are about and the way different political actors deal with them requires going 'top-down' and 'bottom-up', linking the macro with the meso and the microlevel. This study is an attempt to go in this direction.

DANSK RESUMÉ

Denne afhandling undersøger Dansk Folkepartis, italienske Lega Nords og Det Østrigske Frihedspartis ideologier og vælgere i et komparativt perspektiv samt partiernes gennembrud, konsolidering og opnåelse af politisk indflydelse og regeringsansvar.

På trods af en omfangsrig litteratur om højreradikale partier, mangler der stadig komparative analyser, der kan bidrage til at forklare, hvordan det radikale højre er blevet mainstream i nogle vesteuropæiske lande, samt hvilke ligheder og forskelle der karakteriserer disse partier i forhold til ideologi og vælgeropbakning og -holdninger.

Jeg ser derfor bort fra de mange antagelser og diskussioner om begrebsmæssige definitioner, der så ofte har kendetegnet dette forskningsområde, og som i mere end ét tilfælde har overset det egentlige mål for undersøgelsen: de højreradikale partier, deres udvikling over tid samt ligheder og forskelle i ideologi og vælgerskare.

Denne afhandling forsøger derfor at kombinere en analyse af 'udbudssiden' med en analyse af 'efterspørgselssiden' og at frame disse i en komparativ tilgang. Partiernes rolle (udbudssiden) undersøges i en detaljeret analyse af førstehåndskilder såsom partiprogrammer og partilitteratur, mens repræsenteret af vælgerne og deres holdninger (efterspørgselssiden) undersøges i en omfattende analyse af nationale og internationale surveydata.

Tidsmæssigt koncentrerer undersøgelsen sig hovedsageligt om årene fra partiernes gennembrud op til 2007-08, i hvert fald analysen af partiernes ideologiske udvikling. Ambitionen var at udvide perioden til alle faser af de tre partiers udvikling, delt op i gennembrud, konsolidering og opnåelse af politisk indflydelse, og endda regeringsansvar. De kvantitative data, dvs. partiernes vælgersammensætning og adfærd, går fra midten af 1990'erne indtil de seneste valgresultater, nemlig 2007 og 2008 for Dansk Folkeparti og Lega Nord, og 2002-03 for Det Østrigske Frihedsparti.

Ud over at analysere det radikale højre ved at se på samspillet mellem ideologi og vælgerstøtte og -holdninger, har jeg også forsøgt at forstå effekten af de forskellige faser i partiernes livscyklus.

Afhandlingen består af tre dele. Del 1 (kapitel 1 til 4) omhandler teori og metode samt operationalisering af de hoveddimensioner, der mere konkret strukturerer analysen af partiernes ideologi og vælgere. Kapitel 1 introducerer de tre casestudier, deres valgresultater over tid, begrundet valget af de tre cases og slutter med en kritisk evaluering af eksisterende forskning og litteratur om det radikale højre. Kapitel 2 undersøger tre hovedteorier eller –hypoteser, der forklarer det radikale højres fremgang og udvikling og er baseret på hhv. skillelinjer, marginalisering og protest. Dette muliggør en foreløbig kortlægning af nogle af de hoveddimensioner, der ses som kendetegnende for det radikale højres ideologi og vælgere, som kan bruges som reference for den komparative analyse i senere kapitler. Kapitel 3 går dybere ind i diskussionen og ser mere konkret på, hvilke emner der er nyttige at undersøge i forhold til ideologien hos det radikale højre. Dette resulterer i en liste af hovedemner, der danner en

guideline for den empiriske analyse. Kapitel 4, som afslutter den teoretiske og metodologiske del af afhandlingen, undersøger, hvordan de forskellige faser af partiernes livscyklus påvirker især den ideologiske udvikling. Dette er stadig en rimelig uprøvet tilgang til udviklingen af en højreradikal ideologi, da man mest har koncentreret sig om kontekstuelle faktorer såsom mulighedsstrukturer på det nationale niveau, valgsystemer og lignende. Kapitel 4 giver en omfattende beskrivelse af de kilder, der er anvendt i analysen af ideologi for hvert casestudie, dels af hensyn til nøjagtighed, men også for at opfordre til og informere andre analyser af højreradikale ideologier.

Del 2 (kapitel 5 til 7) indeholder den empiriske analyse af partiideologi, og der er et kapitel for hvert parti. Kapitlerne indledes med et afsnit om partiernes historie, kontekst og muligheder, og det er hensigten at afgrænse de forskellige faser i den politiske udvikling. Kapitlerne fortsætter med en analyse af partiideologi og ser på, hvordan forskellige relevante emner har udviklet og forandret sig med tiden. De ideologiske elementer, der bliver analyseret, omhandler velfærd og neoliberalisme, anti-establishment politik, modstand mod indvandring, udenrigspolitik og EU-forhold, autoritære og konformistiske synspunkter. Emnerne refererer til den såkaldte 'gamle' økonomiske dimension af politik såvel som til den 'nye' kultur- og værdidimension.

Resultaterne i disse kapitler antyder en meget dynamisk ideologisk udvikling, som ved adskillige lejligheder har udnyttet de muligheder, der er opstået i en specifik politisk kontekst, og som var meget lydhør over for vælgeres krav. De forskellige faser i partiernes livscyklus påvirker helt klart partiernes ideologiske positioner. Således har ideologien en tendens til at blive radikaliseret, når et parti befinder sig i periferien. Fra denne position er det højreradikale parti fri for det ansvar og forhandlinger med andre partier, der følger med politisk indflydelse og regeringsansvar. Fra periferien er det også nemmere at fremhæve og drage fordel af anti-establishment-synspunkter, da man er uden for det etablerede politiske system og beslutningsprocessen. Det kræver en helt anden grad af ideologisk, programmæssig og organisatorisk pålidelighed fra et højreradikalt parti, når det træder ind i den fase, der her er defineret som konsolidering.

Endelig kan politisk indflydelse og i nogle tilfælde også regeringsansvar påvirke højreradikale partier på forskellige måder. Denne analyse understreger for eksempel den meget gunstige position, som Dansk Folkeparti har indtaget siden 2001. Som støtteparti for VK-regeringen har partiet til stadighed skilt sig ud fra resten af det politiske system og derfor bevaret lidt mere selvbestemmelse, end hvis det havde været i regering.

Højreradikale partier ser dog ud til at have flere vanskeligheder, når det handler om direkte regeringsansvar. Dette tyder på, at når man bringer et højreradikalt parti ind fra kulden, så kan det udstille dets svagheder i forhold til ideologi, program og nogle gange organisation. I nogle tilfælde, fx Det Østrigske Frihedsparti og italienske Lega Nord i visse perioder, bliver dette fulgt op af en ny radikaliserings af partiets ideologi og en tilbagevenden til strategier, der skal skaffe stemmer i stedet for indflydelse.

Partiernes standpunkter i økonomiske spørgsmål spiller også en central rolle, når det radikale højre bliver mainstream. Både Dansk Folkeparti og Lega Nord har et økonomisk program, der passer bedre til deres respektive vælgerprofiler, og som delvis skiller sig ud fra de borgerlige regeringspartier. På den måde har Dansk Folkepartis moderate, men klare pro-velfærdsholdning og Lega Nords (finansmæssigt) føderale orientering haft indflydelse på partiernes position og deres deltagelse i regeringsbeslutninger og –aktiviteter.

En relevant observation fra kapitlerne om partiideologi er den stigende lighed mellem partierne, hvad angår deres modstand mod indvandring. Deres dagsordner ligner hinanden især og mest udtalt i forhold til islam og den kulturelle og værdimæssige indflydelse på vestlige demokratier. Men analysen af partiernes ideologi afslører også, at modstand mod indvandring er et emne, der har været under konstant udvikling. I dag refererer højreradikal anti-indvandringspolitik i stigende grad til kultur og værdier, og ikke udelukkende til velfærdsomkostninger, national og international sikkerhed og kriminalitet. Man kan derfor også se det radikale højre forfægte spørgsmål, som førhen næsten var venstrefløjens 'ejendom'. Det er ikke usædvanligt nu om dage at høre ledende profiler fra disse partier som fortalere for ytringsfrihed, kvinders rettigheder, ligestilling mellem kønnene og social solidaritet.

Der er også ligheder på andre områder, for eksempel EU og udenrigspolitik. Det er dog stadig svært at finde klare beviser for en tværnational læringsproces, der skulle have dannet basis for en ideologisk 'master frame'. Det er svært, for ikke at sige umuligt at kortlægge mønstre for gensidig indflydelse, og det er mere sandsynligt, at de højreradikale partier har lært gennem praksis og ved at iagttage hinanden på mere uformelle måder. Der er også større forskelle mellem partier, fx på økonomiske spørgsmål, selvom der er tegn på voksende ligheder, hvilket tyder på en udvikling mod mere sociale og pro-velfærdsholdninger, især for højreradikale partier med stor vælgeropbakning fra arbejderklassen. Nogle af de ideologiske forskelle kan også være betinget af den position, partier indtager i partisystemet, eller af specielle forhold på det nationale niveau.

Del 3 af afhandlingen (kapitel 8 og 9) undersøger udviklingen af socioøkonomiske profiler og holdninger blandt de tre partiers vælgere. Formålet er at se nærmere på de ligheder og forskelle, der adskiller partierne og finde ud af, om de er tegn på voksende konvergens blandt partiernes respektive vælgerskarer. Resultaterne tyder på, at partier, der har udviklet en ideologi, der bedst afspejler deres vælgeres profil, har større chance for at fastholde eller øge vælgertilslutningen. Dansk Folkeparti er et godt eksempel. Det er det mest utvetydige arbejderparti i dansk politik, og dets opbakning til velfærdsstaten har forstærket partiets støtte og position. I perioden, der undersøges her, er der dog stadig en tydelig forskel mellem de mere velfærdsorienterede DF-vælgere og den neoliberale position, der støttes af regeringspartiernes vælgere.

Modstand mod indvandring og især opfattelsen af indvandring som en trussel mod den nationale kultur og identitet forklarer støtten til det radikale højre. Disse holdninger til indvandring og indvandrere skal dog ses i forbindelse med andre vigtige elementer, såsom det

generelt lave uddannelsesniveau, lav social og institutionel tillid og de konformistiske og autoritære tendenser, der kendetegner højreradikale vælgere. Generelt har indflydelse på politisk og policy og det medfølgende ansvar påvirket vælgernes tillid til politik og til andre mennesker generelt og til en vis grad også i forhold til holdninger til, fx, offentligt forbrug og indvandring.

Formålet med dette studie er at se på det radikale højre fra en anden vinkel, bedømme deres ideologiske og vælgermæssige udvikling over tid i deres respektive kontekster og i forhold til hinanden ved at inddrage de større ideologiske dimensioner og emner. Dette perspektiv har afsløret mønstre af ideologisk konvergens og forskelle på kultur- og værdidimensionen og på den økonomiske dimension i politik. Væsentligst har undersøgelsen vist, at bottom-up og makrostrukturelle fortolkninger ikke til fulde kan afdække det radikale højres udvikling og forandring. For at forstå hvad konflikter handler om, og hvordan forskellige politiske aktører takler dem, er man nødt til at tænke 'top-down' og 'bottom-up', at linke makroniveauet med meso- og mikroniveauet. Denne afhandling er et forsøg på at gå i denne retning.